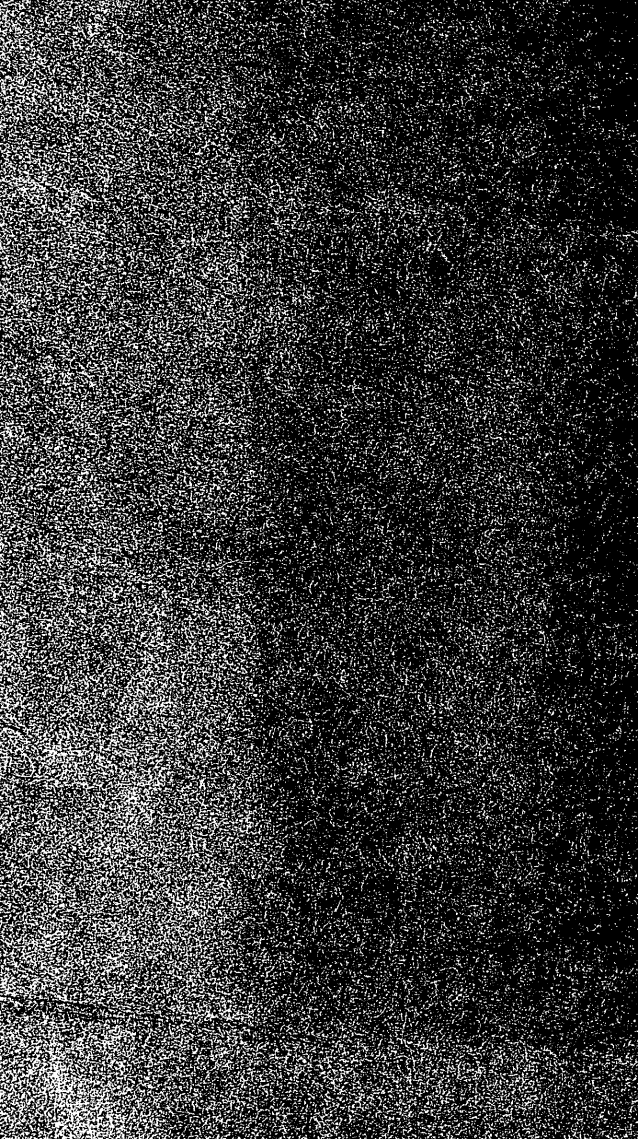
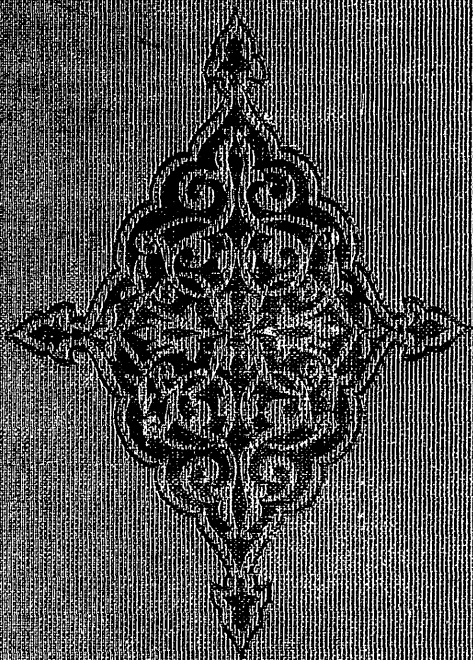






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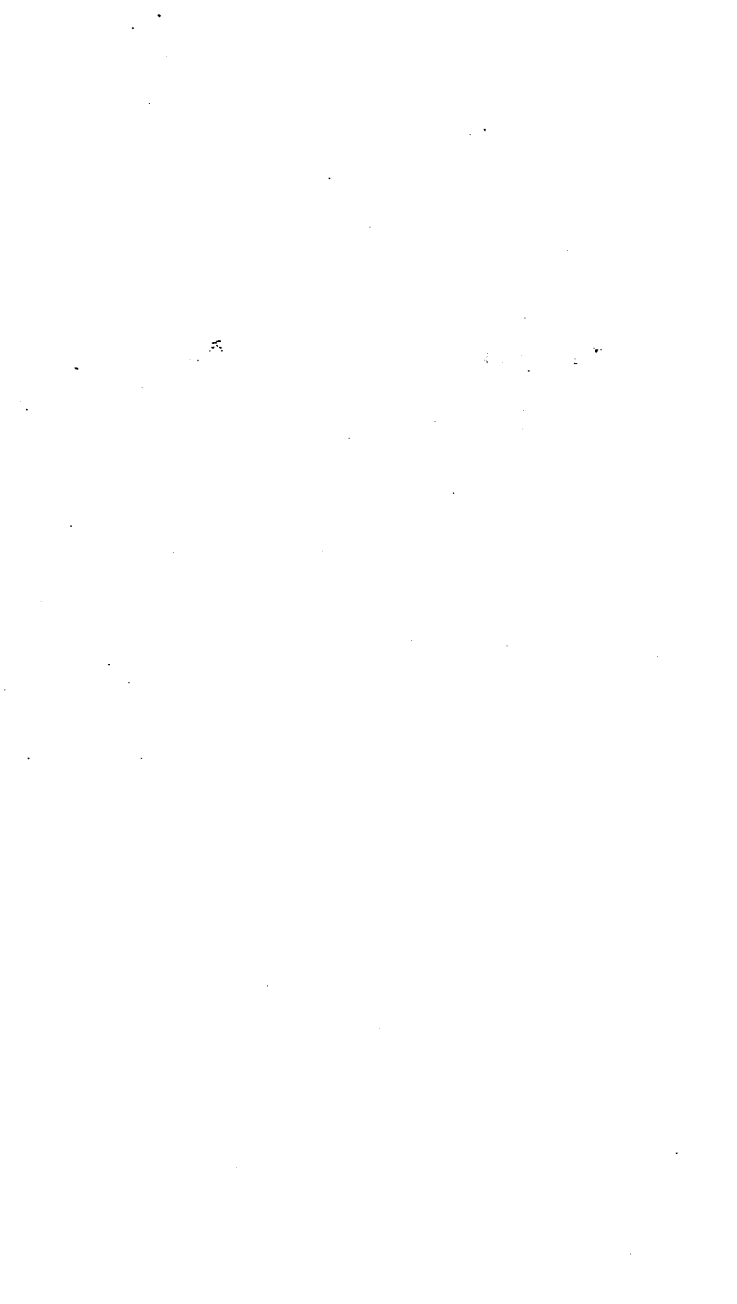
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ISRAEL'S SINS,
AND
ISRAEL'S HOPES.

BEING
LECTURES
DELIVERED DURING LENT, 1846,
AT ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England.

WITH A PREFACE,
BY THE REV. WILLIAM MARSH, D.D.,
INCUMBENT OF ST. MARY'S, LEAMINGTON, AND CHAPLAIN TO
EARL CADOGAN.

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P R E F A C E.

VIEWED in the light of time, the fate of nations is as nothing, compared with the destiny of men in eternity. The riches, and honours, and pleasures of this world, are as children's toys compared with the future portion of the Church of God. And it is a main design of the Holy Scriptures to draw the attention of men to the vanity of the one, and the eternal reality of the other. The prophetic portions of those Scriptures are particularly directed towards this object. They speak of a kingdom to come, which cannot be moved; of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; of pleasures for evermore, and fulness of joy, in the Divine presence. But they plainly declare that the Universal Church will

not be in possession of her inheritance till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and the Jews be converted, and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth. When the Redeemer returns, and asserts His right, as "the Root and Offspring of David," to possess the throne of a Redeemed world; and as the Bright and Morning Star ushers in the millennial day, then will the inhabitants of our globe be astonished at the delusions which have held them captive, and, with unutterable joy, will bow the knee to their rightful Sovereign, "the Prince of the kings of the earth."

The Lectures which have been delivered at St. George's, Bloomsbury, have been intended to cast light upon these interesting subjects, and to call the attention of hearers and readers to their own interest in "the things which shall be hereafter." The present Course is in perfect unison with the former. "The sure mercies of David" will be realized when David's Son, and David's Lord, appears. "The special object of our Lord's ministry" was to his

kinsmen according to the flesh. But "the rejection of Him by His own people" was, in the good providence of our God, overruled to the gathering of a Church from among the Gentiles. And His true disciples, from among Jews and Gentiles, would be as "servants waiting for their master, occupying their talents, and resisting the temptations of the world." During this dispensation, there is a "transfer of blessings from the Jews," as a nation; and "the true standing of the Gentile Church," as grafted into the true olive, would be as an ensign lifted up till the final victory. Then comes "the restoration of the kingdom to Israel," as foretold by Isaiah and Ezekiel and Hosea and Zechariah, and the present "love of the Gentile Christians" will be the signal of that returning mercy. But "the dawn of Zion's glory" waits the return of Zion's King. Previously to which, there will be a "last confederacy of Gentile apostates against Israel." "The vision of Christ to the mourners of Israel" will put an end to the sorrows of Zion for ever, when the hallelujahs

of the ransomed Church shall resound in heaven, saying, " Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God."

If these subjects, which occupied the minds of prophets and apostles, do not occupy our minds, we are not of the same spirit with them. It is earnestly hoped, and sincere prayer is offered, that the reading of this Course may be productive of much spiritual good, by calling forth faith in the Word of prophecy, hope of its speedy fulfilment, and love to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by whose grace, merit, and power, the great salvation is provided, and to whom must be the glory for ever and ever.

WM. MARSH, D.D.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.—p. 1.

THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.

BY THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

2 SAMUEL vii. 12—16.—“I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men : But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

LECTURE II.—p. 36.

THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

BY THE REV. C. J. GOODHART, A.M.,

MINISTER OF ST. MARY'S CHAPEL, READING.

MATT. xv. 24.—“But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

ROM. xv. 8.—“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”

LECTURE III.—p. 69.

THE REJECTION OF MESSIAH BY HIS OWN PEOPLE.

BY THE REV. T. R. BIRKS, M.A.,

LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND RECTOR OF
KELSHALL, HERTS.

DAN. ix. 26.—“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

LECTURE IV.—p. 114.

THE SERVANTS WAITING FOR THEIR ABSENT MASTER :
THEIR OCCUPATIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

BY THE REV. W. DALTON, A.M.,

INCUMBENT OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, WOLVERHAMPTON.

LUKE xix. 11—27.—“And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”

LECTURE V.—p. 144.

THE TRANSFER OF BLESSINGS FROM THE JEWS.

BY THE REV. W. R. FREMANTLE, M.A.,

RECTOR OF MIDDLE CLAYDON, BUCKS.

MATTHEW XXI. 43.—“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth (ποιουντι) the fruits thereof.”

LECTURE VI.—p. 175.

THE TRUE STANDING OF THE GENTILE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. GEORGE FISK, LL.B.,

PREBENDARY OF LICHFIELD, AND MINISTER OF CHRIST CHAPEL,
MAIDA-HILL.

ROMANS XI. 17—21.—“And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”

LECTURE VII.—p. 206.

THE RESTORATION OF THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL.

BY THE REV. A. R. C. DALLAS, M.A.,

RECTOR OF WONSTON, HANTS.

ACTS I. 6.—“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

EZEKIEL XXXVII. 21, 22.—“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.”

LECTURE VIII.—p. 252.

THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS TO THE JEWS THE SIGNAL OF
GOD'S RETURNING MERCY TO ZION, WITH THE BENEFITS
THENCE FLOWING TO THE GENTILES.

BY THE REV. MOURANT BROCK, M.A.,

CHAPLAIN TO THE BATH PENITENTIARY.

PSALM cii. 13—15.—“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.”

LECTURE IX.—p. 293.

THE REDEEMER'S RETURN THE DAWN OF ZION'S GLORY.

BY THE REV. W. W. PYM, A.M.,

VICAR OF WILLIAN, HERTS.

ISAIAH lix. 20, 21; lx. 1—3.—“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

LECTURE X.—p. 319.

THE LAST CONFEDERACY OF GENTILES AGAINST ISRAEL.

BY THE REV. E. LILLINGSTON, B.A.,

RURAL DEAN, AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF ALL SAINTS', DERBY.

EZEKIEL xxxviii. 14—18.—“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy

place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the Heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face."

LECTURE XI.—p. 362.

THE VISION OF CHRIST TO THE MOURNERS IN ISRAEL.

BY THE HON. AND REV. H. M. VILLIERS, M.A.,

RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY.

ZECHARIAH xii. 9, 10.—"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

LECTURE XII.—p. 405.

THE HALLELUJAHS OF THE RANSOMED CHURCH.

BY THE REV. J. H. STEWART, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, LIVERPOOL.

REVELATION xix. 1, 2.—"After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying; Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments."



LECTURE I.

THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.

BY THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

2 SAMUEL VII. 12—16.

“ I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established

22

for ever before thee: and thy throne shall be established for ever."

THANKS be to our gracious God and Father, who permits us to begin another Course of Lectures on the great, practical, and instructive subject of prophecy. Through his mercy his ministers are permitted to preach once more in this church at this season, those Lectures which I feel assured that our heavenly Father has in past years much blessed, and especially in the confession and maintenance of the blessed hope of the Church—the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. May a yet larger and fuller blessing rest upon the present Course! May the Holy Spirit guide us, his ministers, into all truth! May He Himself preserve us from all error, and make our several discourses at this time full of holy unction and of rich spiritual blessings, not only to this congregation, but also to the Churches of Christ at large!

There are two leading objects in the Word of prophecy, both centering in the Lord Jesus Christ, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The first is the Lord Jesus Christ, in his glorious person as God and man, one Christ, in his birth, his first advent, his sufferings,

sacrifice, resurrection, and session at the right hand of God, till he come the second time in his glory to judge the quick and the dead, and establish his heavenly kingdom. The second leading object is the history of his ancient people Israel, their rejecting him and the spread of his Gospel, and their own consequent rejection as the peculiar people of God, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and then the return to their own land, and the restoration of the kingdom to them under the one Lord and Sovereign, the King of Israel, the King of saints, and the King of nations.

To trace the connexion of these two subjects will be a great key to the clear view of the holy providence of our God.

This is the purport of the Lectures during the season of Lent on which we now enter. The first Lecture has been appointed for this evening. Its subject is, "The sure mercies of David," being that fundamental promise made to David, of Christ, his Son, to be the King of Israel. Hence the very title of God's everlasting covenant given in the prophecies, is that of the sure mercies of David: "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." (Isa. lv. 3.)

In the fuller explanation of this subject, may the Divine Spirit be our guide into all truth, so that we may attain a clearer understanding of this truth, and have our faith, hope, and love strengthened and increased.

My text contains that foundation promise to which Isaiah refers, as St. Paul does in preaching to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch. We declare unto you good tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

And it is on this foundation both Isaiah and St. Paul proclaim the free salvation of the Gospel, the full remission, the abundant pardon of all sins to every returning sinner, and free justification—justification from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, to every believer. (Isa. lv. 6—9; Acts xiii. 33—39.) These are the present blessings to be obtained. My text, however, rather directs your attention to the character and glories of the everlasting kingdom.

We will consider—

1. The King announced.
2. The national hope of Israel.
3. The house to be built.
4. The kingdom of the Son of David.

1. THE KING ANNOUNCED.

“I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels. I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son.”

We have in these promises three titles given to the Monarch here announced.

1. THE SON OF GOD. “I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son.”

At first this might seem to be no more than the general promise made to all believers, “I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons.” But the promise is opened out and explained in the New Testament, and there the Divine Spirit teaches us that it is designed to set forth a far superior Sonship to that of the children of God by creation or adoption, even the eternal Godhead and co-equal glory of the only-begotten Son of the Most High. Thus St. Paul writes to the Hebrews,—“Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father,

and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Hence it is clear the Sonship of Christ is truly divine.

So we see when his birth was announced to his virgin mother, the angel told her, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest." When she was astonished, and asked how could this be? the angel said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

This Divine glory is farther illustrated by St. John in the opening of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

See, then, the Divine majesty and glory of the Son here promised to David. It is not a creature, but a Creator, of whom we are speaking; he on whom we depend for life and breath and all things. With what reverence, then, should we search into these deep things of God; and with

what obedience of faith ought his truth to be submitted to and received. The Son of God, far above all angels ! the root as well as the offspring of David ; David's Lord as well as David's Son ; the true and eternal God, in his acts of love to man, is here set before us. He claimed this when on earth as his proper character and glory ; and for claiming this, his due right and title, the unbelieving Jews rejected him as a blasphemer, and he was crucified as a malefactor. O, Divine Immanuel ! may we adore thee the more, and love thee more intensely.

2. Another title is, *The Seed of David* : “ I will set up thy seed after thee.”

There was here, in the first instance, a typical reference to Solomon, who literally succeeded David on the throne of Israel. But the proper and full application of the promise is to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is often expressly mentioned in the New Testament as the seed of David. Thus St. Paul tells the Romans that he was separated unto the Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power. And the same apostle, speaking to the Jews at Antioch, says, “ Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a

Saviour, Jesus." The title implies his true humanity; of our very nature; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. It implies that like David he should go through afflictions and sorrows, through deep humiliations and many trials, as the preparation for the exercise of his kingly office. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Thus he had full experience of temptation and suffering, and is able to sympathize with his people in their afflictions, preparing them also for their future glory. Oh, how should this endear to us our Redeemer! He knoweth our frame. He has a fellow-feeling with us. In all our affliction he is afflicted.

Besides this, his being of the seed of David implies that, like his type David, he has special sympathy with the seed of Israel, his brethren after the flesh, his own people. The New Testament often intimates this; and the Old Testament reveals it in those glowing expressions, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace; and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

A third title here given is **THE KING**. This

title, through the Psalms and the prophecies of the future glory of the Jewish nation, specially relates to the Messiah. He is particularly predicted in them as the future King of Israel: "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment: and a man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and as rivers of waters in a dry place." So again it is foretold of him, "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the First and I am the Last; and besides me there is no God. The King of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee." Equally explicit are the applications of the New Testament: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Where was there ever a monarch that could make such claims, or who possessed Divine glories and perfections like these? Oh! what a glorious and blessed Monarch is this our heavenly Monarch. What a kingdom is his, which, amidst all the shaking and passing away of every other kingdom, has yet to be developed and established on our earth! "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

2. THE NATIONAL HOPE OF ISRAEL.

The whole glory and happiness of Israel is connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the prospect of his coming. The nation is viewed as having a special interest in this King, and that through him alone Israel will be confirmed to be a people to God for ever. There is no possible way of doing lasting good to Israel by measures which disregard Christ, as the true and only restorer, and the everlasting glory of Israel. It is true, only in Christ "thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."

Let us first notice **THE NATURE OF THIS HOPE.** The Jews, from the early promise to their common father Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," were expecting this predicted seed, the promised Messiah. From age to age this expectation was strengthened by fresh promises, and fresh revelations of God's purposes of love. They looked for a mighty Deliverer, who should be raised up to be their Saviour and their King, and through whom all the promises made from the beginning should be fulfilled. But as the patriarchs had many of them died without in their lives obtaining the promise, the Jews in general fully expected their resurrection from the dead to obtain them. The

hope also was made more and more clear to them, that faithful Jews would be raised up to share in the heavenly kingdom of the age to come. Thus of Abraham, it is said by the dying Stephen, "God gave him none inheritance in this land, no, not so much as to set his foot on. Yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him." Hence the Jews generally expected that in the resurrection these promises would be literally fulfilled; and Daniel is told, "Thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Our Lord justifies this hope when he tells the Sadducees, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Thus he proves the resurrection of their dead bodies to receive the promises made to them, "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city."

This view corresponds to what the apostle, after the full description given of the faith of the patriarchs, tells the Hebrews, "These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some

better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The national hope of Israel, therefore, is very glorious. At the coming of the Lord the departed saints are to awake to everlasting life, and shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever. The whole nation is to become eminently righteous and holy, and to be for ever blessed under the reign of their heavenly and eternal King, with abounding blessings, making Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth, and a full and overflowing fountain of temporal and spiritual blessings to be diffused through the world.

Let us next notice THE DEFECTS OF THE HOPE ENTERTAINED BY ISRAEL.

It is an instructive lesson, teaching us not to look merely at favourite parts of the Word of God, but at the whole of the Divine testimony, and especially to be watchful against the many temptations to unbelief, self-righteousness, and worldly-mindedness. Unconscious of their own sinfulness and pride, and of man's great guiltiness and want of Divine atonement and Divine righteousness, they did not see the need of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus; they did not discern the mystery of his cross; they did not discern the need of his resurrection. Wanting in really

enlarged love to their neighbour, they did not enter into the message of grace to us Gentiles. Deficient in true spirituality of mind, they could not realize the spiritual glories of the coming kingdom. They saw only the earthly aspect of their King as a mighty conqueror, subduing their enemies, and exalting their nation above all other nations. They saw even that earthly aspect of his kingdom dimly through the mists of earth, and not in the clear light of heaven. Hence when he came to his own, his own received him not. They welcomed not the spiritual excellence and loveliness of Christian graces as set forth in the beatitudes. They saw no beauty in Christ himself, that they should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men. They esteemed him not. The nation at large knew not, in their day of visitation, the things belonging to their peace; and Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jew, as it was foolishness to the Greek. Oh! may we learn to suspect our own understanding, to search the Scriptures, and to adhere closely to the Word of God.

We will farther notice *the suspense of their hope*. There was a long delay before the Messiah came; but the testimony of the prophets had made the hope clearer and clearer, till Daniel predicted the precise time of Messiah the Prince;

so that pious Jews were waiting for the consolation of Israel, and looking for redemption in Jerusalem. And when he came, how clear, full, and bright was the Divine testimony to his mission! He was accredited by angels from heaven, and by a forerunner on earth; by his birth of a virgin of the house of David; by a visible star pointing out the very place where he was; by the inquiries and worship of the wise men from the East; by a heavenly life; by Divine instruction; by mighty miracles; by unanswerable scriptural appeals; by prophecies clear and unequivocal; and by the resurrection from the dead, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with all his miraculous gifts and holy graces. How manifestly in all these things God bore witness to the Divine mission of his only-begotten Son!

Yet notwithstanding all, the Jews rejected their own King, their own Messiah, whom their own Scriptures so distinctly, so fully described. Prophets and kings had desired to see the day of Christ, and they closed their eyes and refused to see. They killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and persecuted the apostles of Christ. They pleased not God, and were contrary to all men; and at length forbade the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to fill up their sin

always. Amidst all the sacrifices and types of the law foreshewing the wonder of redemption by Christ, they refused to believe the atoning sacrifice of his cross, and to receive their incarnate Lord. Though Isaiah had described all his humiliation; though the Psalms were full of his sufferings; though with this was joined the fullest testimony to his Divine glory, they rejected the Son of God as a blasphemer; they were offended at each circumstance of his humiliation; and they required a sign beyond all the mighty miracles which it pleased God to give for their conversion. He gave one sign more—the resurrection of his Son from the grave, and the consequent outpouring of the Spirit: and rejecting this sign, they have for a long season been cast off through their unbelief. Though still from age to age, a remnant, according to the election of grace, has been gathered from them, yet most righteously and justly to them, and most mercifully and graciously to us Gentiles, their national hope has been suspended, and its fulfilment waits their conversion. This the Saviour clearly foretold when he said, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” What a lesson to us Gentiles not to fall into the same sin of unbelief! a lesson that

ought to be sounded far and wide through the Gentile Churches.

THE ULTIMATE FULFILMENT OF THIS HOPE has yet to be noticed. "God hath not cast away his people." The tabernacle of David, so long trodden down by the Gentiles, will at length be set up again with renewed and infinitely increased glory. In the setting up of that tabernacle, all the inner-court blessings, the resurrection glory made now common to Jews and Gentiles, though at present, and for so long they have chiefly been enjoyed by us Gentiles, will be fully manifested. The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The glory of the heavenly Jerusalem will far exceed all that the eye has seen, the ear heard, or the heart of man conceived.

The lower and visible pre-eminence among the nations on earth will hereafter be restored to Israel. They will first be humbled to accept the punishment of their iniquity, and then, in due time, exalted as the first of the nations. Jerusalem will be the city of the great King; its name will be, The Lord is there; and it will be the great metropolis and the lasting joy of the whole earth. The title which, against their will, was put in writing by the Roman Governor on his cross, "The King of the Jews," will, in spite

of all their past wilfulness, be realised in their conversion. They have been kept separate from all nations, trodden underfoot, humbled, and afflicted for 2,500 years, for these glorious purposes. The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Israel, will be in the midst of them. He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Such is the national hope of Israel. Let us also sympathize with all that God has revealed, and give the Lord no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

3. THE HOUSE TO BE BUILT.

“He shall build a house for my name. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”

The building of a house for God was literally fulfilled by David's son, Solomon, the king of Israel. He erected a glorious temple at Jerusalem, which was dedicated to God with peculiar solemnity, and which God honoured with special manifestations of his presence.

This temple of Solomon was, however, only the emblem or type of a far more glorious building. There is another temple building by One greater than Solomon. The Church of the first-born is the house of the living God, in

which he is especially pleased to dwell. Often is this view taken of the Church of God in the holy Scriptures. Thus the Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." St. Peter also gives us the same truth, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

I must not take up your time by dwelling on the many analogies between the literal and the spiritual temple. We may observe, however, in harmony with our subject, that as Tyre, which may be viewed as a representative of the Gentiles in their relation to Israel, chiefly helped in providing the materials for the outward temple, so the stones of the mystic temple are chiefly hewn in the quarry of the Gentiles. For 1800 years God has, from among the Gentiles, been gathering the materials for his own spiritual house. Thus at Rome St. Paul declared to the Jews, when they rejected the Divine message of the Gospel, "Be it known unto you, that the salvation of

God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear."

The sure foundation-stone of this glorious temple is the Lord Jesus Christ: "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." The Jews, as a nation, rejected him. "This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." All who build on Christ, therefore, shall never be ashamed: each one partakes of the holy character of this temple. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Oh! that each one of you may be lively stones in this temple. Oh! separate yourselves from all that is contrary to it. What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Glorious as was the temple of Solomon, it had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory

that excelleth. In that temple, when the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound, to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, the glory of the Lord filled his house; but what will it be when his elect, from every land, from every age, from Jew and Gentile, all in resurrection bodies, shining as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, with all the holy angels, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, with one voice make one sound to be heard, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" Oh! how glorious will our King be in his completed house for ever.

This glory, however, was not procured by him, and will not be attained by us, without suffering. You find through the Scripture, a close, deep, and mysterious connexion between the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. You see it in Psalm xxii., Isaiah liii., Philip-pians ii., and in many other places. The Church was not purchased without a costly price. We ministers are to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

This, it appears to me, is brought before us in the expressions which are rendered in our version, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with

the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." It has been observed that they might as closely be rendered, "In his suffering for iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, or the rod due to the sins of men, and with the stripes due to the children of Adam."* Christ had no sins of his own to suffer for; but he was made sin for us. Hence the chastisement of our peace was laid on him. The Lord hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He endured the curse for us, redeeming us from the curse of the law. This was the foundation of the recovery of his people, and their everlasting blessedness. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

This is the glory of the everlasting covenant. It is ratified and confirmed by the blood of a sacrifice of infinitely superior dignity and glory to all the sacrifices of the law. To this our Lord directs the special attention of his people: "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

* Or, the words may mean, "With the rod, the stripes, inflicted by the hands of men." Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 14; Mic. v. 1; Acts ii. 23.

By his cross our Lord triumphed over sin, death, and the grave. He has opened the way to everlasting mercy for us sinners. The covenant is well ordered in all things, and sure. Therefore the Church ever triumphantly sings, "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

Thus he became the builder as well as the foundation of this house. As it is predicted of him, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch! and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon the throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

In this respect the apostle, in the Hebrews, sets forth his superiority, as contrasted with Moses, "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for the testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ, as a son

over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end."

God enable us all, then, my brethren, to maintain firmly our confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to abide in him! Let us build every hope on this foundation-stone. Let our hearts be fixed, trusting in the Lord. This is the only present safety of Jew and Gentile; this is the only way to share his heavenly and everlasting kingdom and glory.

4. THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF DAVID.

"I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. Thy kingdom shall be established for ever. Thy throne shall be established for ever."

Why is there this frequent repetition in this short promise? Three times is the perpetuity, the everlasting duration of this kingdom declared. Why is this? It is to meet the difficulties of our faith, arising from the lengthened suspension of the promise, and the apparent improbability of his everlasting monarchy.

Let us, then, dwell on the nature of this kingdom.

1. IT IS A REAL AND VISIBLE DOMINION.

The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ may be viewed in different aspects and characters. There

is a perpetual dominion of Christ as the Son of God, which belongs to him as God over all, blessed for ever. There is also an invisible and spiritual rule, which he has in the hearts of his people. As soon as fallen men know him, receive him as their Saviour, and yield themselves to his service, he dwells in their hearts by faith, and they rejoice to live to him who died for them. The Gospel is mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. This is that kingdom of God which now exists on earth, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

But besides these there is a real and visible dominion of Christ as the Son of man on the throne of David, and over the house of Jacob. This the holy Scriptures have plainly promised, and the Jews have generally expected. Thus Ezekiel (xxxvii. 24) says, "David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them." And so Isaiah (ix. 7) had predicted, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon

his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Isa. ix. 7.) And similar was the vision of Ezekiel (xliii. 7) when he saw the glory of the Lord return to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and heard the Lord speak unto him out of the house, "And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever." So Jer. iii. 17, we are informed, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord." All these promises are summed up and applied to Christ by the declaration of the angel Gabriel to the virgin, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." Here, then, are repeated promises, yet to be accomplished, of a real and visible dominion of Christ over Israel. We believe that they are infallibly true, we confess this before men, and we wait for their fulfilment.

It is a LONG DELAYED KINGDOM. This was clearly to have been anticipated from many statements of our Lord in the New Testament. The times of the Gentiles were previously to elapse, as our Lord intimates when he says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gen-

tiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Hence when the Jews, after his mighty miracles had been wrought, and his ministry fulfilled among them, refused to receive him, our Lord told them, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you." He farther describes, in the parable of the ten talents, his going away and absence from them, as a departure into a far country to receive his kingdom, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom," and to return. He is still in that far country; he has not yet returned; we are waiting for his coming. But till he does return the Jewish nation cannot possess the promised kingdom. All the preparations, on an immense scale, have for 1800 years been making for his having an inexpressibly glorious kingdom at his return. When the apostles, however, asked our Lord their last recorded question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" while our Lord's answer strengthened their hope of the ultimate restoration of this kingdom, it evidently intimated its being deferred for a lengthened period: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." The delay, therefore, should not weaken, but strengthen our hopes of this kingdom. It is the

accomplishment, not the disappointment, of prediction.

IT IS A RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY KINGDOM. The lengthened bondage, humiliation, and sufferings of the Jewish nation, and all the sorrows through which they have passed for so many centuries, are the necessary preparation for that distinguished holiness which will be their future glorious character. This has been God's plan with all their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, all by humiliation and sorrows came to their eminent holiness. Ezekiel (xiv. 22, 23) predicts concerning the remnant restored, "Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings: and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God." So again it is promised, "Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever." Similar are the statements, "They shall call them the holy people:" "O Jerusalem, the holy city, from henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean:" "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Oh! blessed and glorious cha-

racter, reserved of God for this nation and this kingdom. The Jewish kingdom will be what our earth has never yet seen—a righteous kingdom; it will be the first of the kingdoms of the earth that have attained universally this high excellence—a righteous and holy people, under the dominion of the One, pre-eminently the righteous One, the Lord Jesus Christ! What a blessing it must thus be to the whole earth!

It will therefore be A BLESSED AND GLORIOUS KINGDOM. The passages of Scripture which show this, comprehend a large amount of the most glowing promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. The sacred writers delight to dwell on the joyful and animating theme. The seventy-second Psalm describes it in many particulars. The sixtieth of Isaiah is full of it. The latter chapters of Ezekiel go into minute details of the nature and glories of the city, the temple, and its holy services. The images and figures on this subject are the richest in the holy Scriptures: “I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thy sun shall no more go down, nor thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting

light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." Oh! how clear it is that all this glory is yet to come. Surely such promises teach us the pre-eminent blessedness and glory of the kingdom of Israel under Messiah their Prince. Let us joyfully receive the Divine testimony, so unequivocally plain.

It is also AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

We have already noticed that the Holy Ghost, in our text, has no less than three times repeated the testimony of God to the everlasting duration of this kingdom. When the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, Joseph assured him it was because the thing was established by God. When the perpetuity of the kingdom is thrice repeated, we have then special assurance from God himself of the absolute certainty and unchangeableness of the everlasting continuance of this kingdom.

From the prophecies of the Old Testament the Jews constantly expected this. When our Lord foretold his own death, they brought this as an objection, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou that the Son of man must be lifted up?" (John xii. 34.) Our Lord, as usual, without gratifying their curiosity, called them to the immediate

practical duty, "While ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." Thus would they attain the inheritance of the saints in light, when the Lord returned.

But the Jews were right in expecting an everlasting kingdom under their Messiah. We may observe again and again how words of everlasting continuance are joined, both in the Old and New Testament, to this kingdom. Isaiah says, "They shall inherit the land for ever." Joel (iii. 20) declares, "Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation." Amos (ix. 15) testifies, "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord God." Daniel (vii. 18) assures us, "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." And Ezekiel (xxxvii. 25) makes it yet more plain and explicit, "They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children *for ever*: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever." These declarations are confirmed on New Testament evidence by the angel Gabriel's assurance to his virgin mother, "He

shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

We need not be stumbled by imagined difficulties of this truth, as connected with other parts of Divine truth, such as with the universal fire in which the earth and all its works shall be burned. He who preserved Noah in the deluge, and the three children in the burning fiery furnace, has promised respecting Israel also, "I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." Nor need we attempt to solve difficulties that may hence be supposed to be connected with the general judgment of all mankind and its final issues to each of everlasting punishment and everlasting life. We know too little of the period that judgment may take, or of its particulars, to found upon it any insurmountable difficulty to hinder our receiving very plain, distinct, and often repeated, testimonies of the Spirit. The Lord hath spoken it: this is enough to be the foundation of our faith.

Here, then, we may see deep and all-important reasons for all the wonderful dealings of God with this nation, and their preservation in distinctness among the nations to this hour. There are wise, gracious, holy, and most merciful

purposes of God's everlasting loving-kindness yet to be accomplished in our world through them.

These purposes are hastening on to their accomplishment. The signs of the times respecting Israel are more and more remarkable. The way in which the Gentiles, in their unbelief, are favouring Israel and transferring civil privileges and political power to them; the emptying of the land of Judea of its present inhabitants; the increasing preparations for their restoration; the drying up of the Euphrates, or wasting of the Turkish empire; and the passing away of the Turkish woe; the firman to allow the rebuilding of the Hebrew Christian Church at Jerusalem; the close of between three and four years' ministry of the first Hebrew Christian Bishop of Jerusalem since the apostolic age; the general interest felt by the servants of God for Zion;—all speak with distinctness the time to favour Zion; yea, the set time is come. The times of the Gentiles are passing away; the restoration of Israel is at hand.

As the watchmen of the Lord it is our duty to call your attention to these things; especially as they are directly connected with the visible return of our Lord from heaven, and the great duty of being prepared and ready for the coming of the Son of man.

The important lessons to be derived from this subject by us Gentile Christians are full of weighty, solemn, and practical interest.

1. *Let us learn the place of the Gentile Churches in the counsels of God.* An election out of the Gentiles is gathered into the Church, in a vast parenthesis of delay, before the kingdom be fully established under the dominion of Christ Jesus. The apostle speaks of it as a special revelation of a mystery made known to him, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel. He calls it the mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to the saints,—even the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. We Gentiles are in danger of being highminded under this privilege. The apostle, therefore, gives much instruction on this in the eleventh of Romans, telling us, “Boast not against the branches. Because of unbelief they were broken off. Be not highminded, but fear:” and specially warns us, if we continue not in his goodness we shall be cut off. How impressive his admonition,—“I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of

the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." When the fulness of the elect Gentiles is completed, then Israel is restored, and their restoration is again as life from the dead to the world. The apostle intimates that unbelief which is now so characteristic of Gentile Christendom, and that salvation of the human race as the result of God's dispensations, when he says, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." In the meanwhile, believing in Jesus you are lively stones of a spiritual house, sharing for ever the fullest glory of the kingdom to be established. Rejecting Jesus, you are cut off and perish in your sins. Oh, be sure that you are grafted into the good olive-tree and abide in him! Our being taken into the kingdom of God was from the overflowings of Divine grace to the Gentiles. How aggravated will be our guilt if we neglect so great salvation! How great our glory if we now receive it!

Let us learn, also, *the danger of standing in the way of the current of God's grace flowing to others.* This was the consummating guilt of Israel. The Jews themselves, though they had crucified the Lord and persecuted his followers, were not finally cast off, throughout the times of the Gentiles, till they had resisted the preaching

of the Gospel to the Gentiles. The apostle states this as the filling up of their sins,—“Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, for the wrath is come on them to the uttermost.” It was then that God, in righteous indignation for not receiving and for killing their King, and for refusing to allow the Gentiles to hear of him as a Saviour, cast away his people, and now, for 1800 years, they have been lying under his awful displeasure.

Let us guard against sinning like them. Let us not hinder the return of the current of mercy back to Israel. Let us rejoice in and help forward every effort to make known to them the sure mercies of David. Let us help to send the gracious invitations of his Gospel to every Jew, scattered over all the earth. Rising above all selfish views, mortifying all carnal lusts, let us enter into the grandeur and glory of the mind of our heavenly Father,—let us rise to the fulness and comprehensiveness of his love.

LECTURE II.

THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

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MATTHEW XV. 24.

*“ But He answered and said, I am not sent but
unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*

ROMANS XV. 8.

*“ Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of
the circumcision for the truth of God, to con-
firm the promises made unto the fathers.”*

THERE is an importance in certain methods and in certain means, in the eyes of God, which may not at first sight be discernible by us : and hence it is our duty to follow closely His expressed will, without allowing our judgment of any

prescribed mode of acting to interfere with the simplicity of our obedience.

For want of carefully attending to this point many are inclined to undervalue the sacraments and other outward means of grace, because they are not to be compared, in their importance, with the spiritual blessing with which they are connected. But such persons might just as well set at nought the vessel in which the thirsty traveller gathers the rain-drops, as of no value in comparison with that which it contains; when notwithstanding, without its intervention, the most abundant showers would fail to refresh his thirsty spirit. The case is very similar in reference to the great salvation, in connexion with the subject before us. We might have supposed, that in setting forth so glorious a scheme of mercy, God would have overlooked altogether the difference between Jew and Gentile, and have contemplated the world as one hospital of the diseased and dying. But He has not overlooked this distinction in redemption as thus far wrought out; neither will He overlook it in the glory which is yet to be accomplished. Salvation, great and glorious as it is, has been brought about by a series of specially designed arrangements, and in these the Jews and Gentiles have had each their peculiar place; in reference to

which no indifference has been manifested, and no confusion allowed. It is to a portion of these arrangements that our attention is to be more particularly directed this evening; and our subject is, "The Special Object of our Lord's Ministry," as defined by the passages at the head of this sermon: namely, Matt. xv. 24, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and Rom. xv. 8, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

And here we may just suggest, whether the feelings of Christians generally, if we may judge by appearances, have not been till lately very much disinclined to receive the scriptural account of that mode of acting which these passages teach us God chose for Himself. Suppose, for instance, that they could have been previously informed that our Lord's ministry would be exclusively to the Jews; that He would tell a Canaanitish woman that it was not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs; that He would strictly charge His apostles not to go into the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into the villages of the Samaritans;—would they not have been disposed to think that such a view of the case was quite inconsistent with the grace and amplitude of His full and free salvation. And

yet all this was the fact; and when He came, His ministry, and, to a great extent, that of His apostles, was thus singularly restricted.

But let us proceed at once to a consideration of the subject before us.

I. And, *first*, what led to our Lord's special line of conduct in this matter?—that is, how came the Jews into such a position of preference? And here we must refer very briefly to their history.

1. God's *election* stands at the head of all. Here, as well as in everything else, all must be traced ultimately to the choice and purpose and will of Almighty God. God called Abram, and said unto him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 1—3.) This election and calling of Abraham, and covenant of free grace with him,—we know not why or wherefore,—lies at the very foundation of all that followed; and while we can assign no other reason than God's sovereign will, this is at once sufficient and satisfactory,

and, indeed, alone adequate to bear up the mighty superstructure of all that has been and shall be raised upon it.

2. This election and calling of God was followed by a visible sealing, and an abiding sign of confirmation of the covenant He so graciously made with Abraham. This we find in Gen. xvii. After somewhat more explicitly stating the everlasting covenant into which He had already entered with the patriarch, the Lord adds, "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." (Vers. 9, 10.) Circumcision became, accordingly, the standing seal of the Abrahamic covenant; and, remember, that covenant secured to Abraham a seed more numerous than the stars of heaven; all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and the blessedness, in his seed, of all the nations of the earth.

3. The result of this was that long train of special mercies to Abraham's descendants which we trace in their interesting history in the Old Testament. Constantly rebelling, and as constantly pardoned, through a long series of years, they were surrounded and upheld by that love which, free

and undeserved at first, remained faithful to them afterwards; and while other nations trusted their vain idols to their confusion, the Jews were exalted and distinguished by the real and effectual blessing which they continually received from the true God whom they worshipped. Temporal and spiritual mercies, national and ecclesiastical privileges, were all alike theirs. What nation was there so great who had God so nigh unto them, as *the Lord their God* was in all things which they called upon Him for? St. Paul exactly traces this same line of proceeding in his address at Antioch, opening with the words, "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it." And Stephen, at much greater length and with more minuteness, goes over the same ground in his sermon to the Jews, which may be referred to, Acts vii. throughout.

4. There was besides, along with all this, the exercise towards them of that special grace, by which many became true and lively members of the Church of God. The mass of the nation were but nominally the people of the Lord; and from time to time, sinking deeper into sin, were becoming ripe for overwhelming visitation. But

there were some among them in every generation chosen unto salvation, and these He was bringing to a vital knowledge of Himself and gathering to an eternal and heavenly glory.

Now on all this, which we have thus briefly reviewed, we have two or three very important remarks to make in reference to the purposes God had in view in this wonderful arrangement.

(1.) He hereby established a *very special* witness to His own character and glory, in contrast to that witness which, among the nations at large, was only ordinary. To the Gentiles He gave fruitful seasons and rain from heaven, filling their hearts with food and gladness; and even the invisible things of Him were known through the things which did appear. But still it was to the Jew the *features* of His character became manifested. They had, at least, the means of clearly distinguishing His mercy and truth, His righteousness and holiness; and while to the world at large He remained the "unknown God," all His perfections, through His revelation to them, came at once within the reach of their knowledge and their confidence.

(2.) He hereby arranged an instrumentality by which might be attained the highest standard of spiritual character, and the highest amount of national prosperity; His blessing being in each

case the manifest cause, and His glory, consequently, the contemplated end. He intended the Jews to be a nation as remarkable for their temporal happiness on the one hand, as for their righteousness and holiness on the other: that the world in general might see how good and blessed a thing was His service, and that they that would fear the Lord should want no manner of thing that was good.

(3.) Further, the Lord would by all this establish a certain order, and form a channel, through which His truth should be communicated to others. He might have sent angels or prophets *directly* to the Gentile nations; but He chose that through the Jews should be conveyed to them the knowledge of His name. His Jewish people were to be His witnesses. With them were to be deposited His oracles, and from them His law was to go forth. In and through the *seed of Abraham* were the nations of the earth to be blessed, even before the coming of the Messiah, if they were blessed at all; and from them the light was intended to spread, even to the ends of the earth.

(4.) There was yet another thing gained in all this arrangement, namely, the confirmation of that most important truth, *that there can be no GLORY except through GRACE.*

It had ever been so ; and the Jew was not to be the exception. The angels who still retain their glory, we are told in Scripture, are the *elect* angels. Grace has preserved them.

So also with Adam : he stood, in the first instance, only to fall ; and neither he, nor any one of his children, ever obtained a life that could not be lost, except through that grace which bringeth salvation, the end of which is life eternal. The same remark might be made concerning the nations of the world generally. None of them ever attained unto *real* glory and prosperity, inasmuch as none ever attained unto the grace of God. They were great, as the world often accounts greatness ; but they were notorious for their sin and their wickedness : and in the days of Noah, the end of all flesh came before the Lord, because they had thoroughly corrupted their way before Him.

! Just the same thing was to be evidenced in the case of the Jews, only under circumstances much more likely to have produced opposite results.

Their nation was a Church, and blessed with the most signal privileges ; their land, one of eminent fruitfulness, and fitted to raise its inhabitants to the height of temporal prosperity. But all alike proved unavailing without *the* grace of God. A few from time to time,

through that grace, sought the Lord, and found Him; but the mass of the nation, setting at nought His commands, and seeking their own welfare neither in obedience to His law, nor in dependance on His grace, only became more and more deeply involved in national sin, till they perished ultimately in national apostacy. Accordingly, when our Lord appeared in the midst of them, no other description fitted them so well as that of "lost sheep." They had wandered from their fold, and, blindly following their blind leaders, were the prey of every assailant, under the guilt of having forsaken their own mercies.

And yet our Lord came to these lost sheep, and came to *them* especially. Though they had thus forsaken Him, yet did He not turn away His face from them, but made them, we might almost say, *exclusively* the object of His personal ministry.

It will be well here, perhaps, to enumerate the passages in which this is specially declared.

In Matt. x. 5, 6, we have His commission to His apostles, and nothing can be more distinct: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The former of the verses

prefixed as our text is, as we have seen, just as explicit, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. xv. 24.)

Nor were His conduct on the one hand, and His teaching on the other, inconsistent with such words as these. He seems always to have taken special pains that no umbrage should be given to the Jews through even any *equality* of treatment in reference to the Gentiles, much less from any *preference* being shown to them. And though He did give intimations occasionally, both by what He said and what He did, of the extending of the blessings of His Gospel to all nations, yet He uniformly distinguished the Jew, and that publicly and unequivocally. "Ought not this woman," said He, "*being a daughter of Abraham*, to be loosed from this bond?" (Luke xiii. 16.) "This day," said He of Zaccheus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is *a son of Abraham*." (Luke xix. 9.) And in His conversation with the woman of Samaria, He told her plainly, without directly solving her question about the mountain, "Salvation is of the Jews." Several of His discourses and parables leave the same impression. Those of the marriage, and of the prodigal son, show the place the Jew held, though the former intimated very distinctly how soon it would be forfeited.

And in perfect consistency with all this, when just about to leave His disciples, He closed His directions to them with the remarkable injunction, that they were *to begin at Jerusalem*. One or two passages in the history of the apostles show how exactly their feelings and conduct coincided in this matter with those of our Lord. In Peter's very first sermon, (Acts ii. 39,) he expressly says, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off." And by even this last expression we cannot understand him to mean the Gentiles, for it is clear he had no idea as yet of their being brought in. In Acts iii. 25, 26, we hear from the same mouth the following similar and remarkable words: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you *first* God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." The difficulty which occurred in inducing the Jews to believe that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with them of Gospel blessings, is well known to all. After, however, this had been made clear, the apostles still pursued the same plan. When Paul was at Antioch, he specially addressed the "men of

Israel." "Men and brethren," said he, "children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." (See the whole passage.) And when the next Sabbath-day the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted and blasphemed, Paul and Barnabas still said, "It was *necessary* the Word of God should *first* have been spoken to you." Nor is this all. The Apostle Paul, even when stating the blessed effects of the glorious Gospel in its most wonderful work on the heart of the sinner, does not lose sight of this order. "I am not ashamed," saith he, "of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; *to the Jew first*, and also to the Greek." (Rom. i. 16.) See also ii. 9, 10.

We consider, then, that it is put beyond a question that we rightly understand Scripture to teach us, that the Jews were the special object of our Lord's ministry.

II. We proceed, secondly, to offer some explanation of the fact, as far as we can gather it.

(1.) *The very circumstances of the Jews, if there had been no other cause, might have prompted it.* The Gentiles were in a lamentable condition, but the Jews were in a state still more deplorable. They had received the covenant of God, and its

seal was upon them; and, accordingly, the greater their privileges, the greater their condemnation. They were lost sheep, who had been gathered, and had strayed again. All their previous blessings left them but liable to a heavier curse; and because they were the people of God, it was of the greater importance they should, if possible, be brought to a conviction of the guilt they were incurring. Surely, in like manner, if such cases admit of comparison,—and we believe they do,—our own population, who are dying without Christ, are in a more pitiable state, and demand, therefore, more earnest exertion than even those who have never heard His name, and cannot, therefore, be guilty of the same amount of unbelief.

(2.) *The Jews were our Lord's own people.* “He came to *His own*, and *His own* received Him not.” Though He was the Saviour of the world, yet He showed a special affection both for His nation and their land. His cry over their devoted city cannot be mistaken, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . how often would I have gathered *thy children*, . . . and ye would not!” His heart yearned over His own Zion! and even now, for Zion's sake He will not rest, and for Jerusalem's sake He will not hold His peace.

(3.) Further, *He would establish the fact, that*

though in the first instance the promises and covenant of God were of free grace, still, when once given them, they were the rightful inheritance of the Jewish people. In other words, He plainly showed by His whole ministry, that the gifts and calling of God were without repentance. If we ask why God chose the Jews? were they better than the heathen? the answer is, No: they were a rebellious and stiff-necked people: and not for their righteousness, but of His own mercy, the Lord thus dealt with them. But when He had so chosen them, and given them their inheritance, He would not take it away. Nothing could move Him to forget or break the covenant He made with their fathers. Some of them might not believe; but what of that? their unbelief could not make the faith of God of none effect. And our Lord's ministry spoke, as He intended it should speak, of the unalterable faithfulness of the original covenant, and that God still regarded them as the children of those with whom that covenant had been ratified for ever. Surely nothing ought to have told upon them more than this, or to have prevailed more to secure their ready and earnest attention.

(4.) *Our Lord would thus place the Jews in the most favourable position for receiving the truth.* His election of them, in the first instance, was

not an isolated circumstance ; but it was followed up by the use of all the means which could evidence the genuineness of the love He had professed for them. Hence, when He came upon earth, it was not with the bare offer of His mercy, sufficient at once to exonerate Him and to condemn them. But His appeals were direct, earnest, affectionate, persevering ; and withal, *exclusive*. He made the Jews feel *they* were His object. He gave them no room for jealousy, nor the least reason to think they were slighted. Boasting, as they did, that they were the children of Abraham, and entrenched as they were in their national prejudices, our Lord, with all His faithfulness, never led them to suppose that He overlooked what they thus overvalued ; or that He slighted the claims they grounded on their ancestry, though He warned them that they were trusting them to their destruction.

(5.) *He would convince them that God was ready at that time to fulfil His covenant with the descendants of Abraham, and that, in short, they might see in Himself its fulfilment actually carrying out.* Hence His continual appeal, throughout His ministry, to the prophecies of the Old Testament, the force of which lay in this,—that to the Jews were committed the oracles of God, and those He came to establish and accomplish. Hence

His repeated declarations in reference to the law, that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. In short, His ministry was one great controversy with His people on the truth of God; He, on the one hand, declaring that He was come *to* them and *for* them, to fulfil all God had promised; and they, on the other hand, putting the covenant away from them, and judging themselves unworthy of eternal life. The Lord had, in the most solemn manner, entered into engagements with the *Jewish people*; and in the fulness of time, Christ came to that people with the professed purpose of meeting all those engagements, and of fulfilling every jot and tittle of God's solemn covenant.

(6.) *His ministry was a very distinct testimony that God had not in any way altered the order that had from the first been set forth.* Considering the lapse of time during which prophecy had ceased, and the condition, when our Lord came, of the Jewish nation, we might have felt no surprise if an alteration of the arrangements, without, of course, any change in the end designed, had been introduced when our Lord appeared. But all, notwithstanding, remained the same; and every step of our Lord's ministry only set the seal to the fact, that salvation was of the Jews; and that, whatever the nation might prove, God's

line of working would remain unchangeable and the same.

(7.) Accordingly, another very striking end in Christ's making the Jews the special object of His ministry was, *to establish a Jewish channel, through which, according to His original purpose, mercy might flow to the Gentiles.* He therefore called the apostles, and established an instrumentality through them, by which this end was accomplished. Jewish Evangelists, and Jewish disciples, proclaimed His truth to the ends of the earth; and while, as Paul teaches us, through Jewish *unbelief* we obtained mercy, and our blessing has come through our being grafted into their olive-tree, it is through Jewish exertion that that mercy reached us, and through Jewish effort and self-denial, that we were made actual partakers of the blessing.

(8.) Lastly, under this head, in our Lord's ministry being specially directed to the Jews, He became, to use the apostle's words prefixed as part of our text, "a minister of the *circumcision* for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." Circumcision being the seal of the Abrahamic covenant, and our Lord being the seed of Abraham, and receiving that seal, the covenant with Abraham stands with Christ. And what was the covenant with Abra-

ham? In every instance in which the expression, "to thy seed," occurs in connexion with Abraham, or his children Isaac and Jacob, the gift of the land is expressly mentioned; and the seal of circumcision sealed to Abraham its everlasting possession. When, therefore, Christ came to the Jews, He came to them *specially*, as a minister of the circumcision; on the one hand, to *manifest* the truth of God, and on the other hand, to *claim its fulfilment*; to be what God had promised,—a seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and to be able to claim for the Jews what He had further promised,—that the land should be theirs for ever. What, therefore, they had forfeited, He came in a condition to recover; and the land which was Abraham's under the seal of circumcision, is now Christ's, under the same seal of the same covenant. At present, indeed, it is trodden down of the Gentiles, laid waste, and desolate; but still it is reserved. And when He shall come whose it is, it shall be recovered to its rightful possessors, and to more than its original fruitfulness and glory. The right of it in reversion belongs to the King of the Jews; and in due time Jerusalem shall be the throne of the Lord.

To sum up this part of our subject, we see plainly that God, having placed the Jews where

He had in covenant and privileges, only acted consistently in dealing with them as He did, through the ministry of Jesus. "It was necessary," to use the words of the Holy Ghost, "that so it should be." God's visiting the Gentiles was a matter of *mercy*; but His dealings with the Jews, a matter of *truth*. (See this contrast Rom. xv. 8, 9, which is more marked in the original than in our translation.) Accordingly, our Lord was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And though, in a salvation so great and so glorious, it might have been expected that the difference between Jew and Gentile would have been altogether overlooked, the orderly method which God had designed was strictly adhered to; and the Gospel was the power of God, to the *Jew first*, and also to the Greek.

If, therefore, the question were again asked, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" our Lord's ministry may be considered as giving the same answer as the apostle, "Much every way: chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." In other words, to use the language of the same apostle, "*They* were Israelites; to *them* pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of

the law, and the service of God, and the promises; *theirs* were the fathers, and of *them* as concerning the flesh Christ came." And when He did come, He recognised and treated them as possessing all these privileges, which it was His object to confirm, and not to abrogate.

III. It remains that we make those remarks on the whole subject which it naturally suggests. And here we shall find verified what must have been already often observed, that we cannot touch the Jewish subject but we find gathering round it all the most blessed truth of God.

(1.) *Some features in the character of God stand out in singular prominence* in the review we have taken of these wonderful arrangements.

i. How striking is *the sovereignty of His election!* and how remarkably, in His choice of the Jewish people, has He illustrated His eternal election of the Church which He has loved!—"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." (Ephes. i. 4—6.)

ii. See, also, *His free and unshackled grace in promising.* He steps forward to the Jew, and of

His own mercy, without any desert on their parts, makes over to them, by the covenant of promise, the richest blessings. And what is the rich inheritance of the spiritual Church but those precious promises, just as undeserved and just as free, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus? See the blessed contrast of the *law*, righteous in its *condemnation*, and the *promise*, gracious in its *life*, Gal. iii. throughout.

iii. Again, we have here the exhibition of *His unchangeableness in His gifts and calling*, as resulting from His sovereign choice and gracious promises. "Hath God cast off His people? God forbid." And are any of His faithful ones doubting and cast down, who follow after righteousness, who seek the Lord? Then, if they are Jews, let them "look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged. Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. For the Lord shall comfort Zion." And, if they are Gentiles, let them know, that if they are Christ's, "then are they Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

iv. Once more, observe *His invincible perseverance in carrying out His purposes*. Do what the devil will, the Lord is never baffled. There is a *deliberation*, indeed, in the fulfilment of His will; no unseemly *haste*; no *hurry*: but still no uncertainty, no risk of failure: and for a plain reason,—He can *command* time. A week, a year, a hundred years, a thousand years, are all equally and alike within the infallible certainty of His arrangements. And He can be patient with the sinner, and allow even the devil his time; and all the while only secure, instead of rendering uncertain, the fulfilment of His determination. Satan tries again and again, as we have seen, to withstand the steady stream of His purposes: but it widens and deepens as it flows, and, becoming daily mightier, shall issue in the eternal glory of His chosen ones, and in the everlasting confusion of them that hate Him.

(2.) *We learn much from this subject in reference to God's working.*

i. *We see Him, having a grand object in view, quite independent, in one sense, of Jew and Gentile.* All the way down to the first coming of the Lord a spiritual seed was being gathered, mainly, indeed, out of the Jews, but still some out of the Gentiles, and these, along with us and others who have believed since Christ came,

without distinction of race or clime, are to form the glorious resurrection-Church, in whom He will be glorified for ever,—that Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all.

ii. *Yet, notwithstanding, we see other and subordinate objects which are ever kept in view.* Every link in the chain is within the purpose of God, as well as the weight of glory suspended from the whole: and every link must have its place, and keep it, and do its office. And hence, if the difference between Jew and Gentile be, so to speak, lost in the ultimate glory, it is never overlooked in the arrangements which lead to it, God adhering steadily to the order He has laid down and the means He has chosen.

iii. *We see, also, that God will choose His own instrumentality, and, in the end, accomplish His purpose by it.* It may seem worthless: nay, it is always proved to be in itself worthless and unprofitable; but still He will do His will by it, and thus manifest His undivided claim to all the glory. The Jew turned out apparently fit for nothing, and seemed only calculated to cast an imputation on the wisdom which selected him. But shall it prove so? Nay: the nation may be cast out, but the Lord shall have a remnant. Abraham's seed shall yet be what the Lord purposed; and through them shall His way yet

be known upon earth, His saving health unto all nations.

iv. *Again, we see that those who will not bend to the purposes of God, and WILLINGLY fulfil them, shall fulfil them UNWILLINGLY.* Not that the delicate and responsible working of the human will is interfered with; and yet the deserved judgment of them that reject Him shall be blindness and hardness of heart. “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

(3.) *We learn from this subject, also, a profitable lesson as to God's dealings with us.*

i. *God will deal fairly and justly with every man.* He will give each what is sufficient in the way of means and privileges, and a fair opportunity of making use of them. And this because of *His mercy*. He does not send us His truth that we may reject it, and thus afford Him a manifest ground for at once condemning us. No: “He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” It was in all the sincerity of the deepest affection that He wept over Jerusalem; and we believe His words, when He said, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in

this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" How should Christ's patience and earnestness with the Jews lead the sinner to seek Him! What an impression should we get from His whole ministry of the *truth* of His love!

ii. *And yet it should be solemnly remembered, that the possession of the most exalted privileges does not ensure the saving reception of the Gospel, or any real benefit from it.* Nay, the personal ministry of our Lord Himself did not ensure it. Prophet after prophet had been commissioned to exhort and reprove the Jews; but they rejected every message, and even treated with reproach and violence those who sought to save them from destruction. At last, He who spake as never man spake, went among them, meek and lowly, and every word was gentle and encouraging. He would have gathered them, but they would not: and, from being exalted to heaven, they were cast down to hell. How should we Gentiles take heed! Who has ever had such light, such privileges, such opportunities as we have had? Where is there a land like ours, through which truth circulates, and where knowledge unto life is attainable? Oh, to seek for those showers of heavenly grace in the preaching of the Word, without which the precious seed, however thickly scattered, will still be unfruitful, and the wilder-

ness for ever fail to yield the blessed harvest of righteousness and salvation.

(4.) *We cannot omit a remark, in reference to our blessed Lord, in connexion with our subject.*

i. *How entirely did He give Himself up to His Father's will, just to be and to do what seemed good to Him in everything.* He sent Him to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and though He was despitefully and shamefully entreated, yet still He went on, in all affectionate earnestness, to finish the work which was given Him to do: yet did He go from city to city, and from village to village, preaching the Word of life, and calling in the wanderers to the fold of His mercy. And this was no compulsory service, but it was His meat and drink. And when their guilt was consummated in lifting Him up on the cross, and He might justly have appealed to the Father who sent Him, to avenge their undeserved and injurious treatment, His dying breath went up in prayer for His very murderers, and, amid His own sorrows and their mockery, He besought for them forgiveness.

ii. And, on the other hand, in all His discouragement in reference to the Jewish people, who rejected every advance of mercy, and wrapped themselves up in obstinacy and unbelief, *how He comforted Himself in the sure fulfilment of His*

Father's purposes, and in the certain working out of His fore-ordained glory! "All that the Father giveth me," said He, "shall come unto me:" reminding us most forcibly of the words of the prophet, Isaiah xlix. 4, 5,—“Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” Still, therefore, He pursued His way; still went after the lost and wandering; still called, though they refused; and stretched out His hand, though few regarded. And ours, as ministers of the Gospel, must be His unbaffled diligence and sustaining comfort. We must be instant in season, out of season; in disappointment still persevere, under discouragements still press forward. If some reject the truth, and many slight it;—if some are mere formalists, and others heartless professors,—still those whom the Father giveth to Christ shall come, and in gathering them we shall not fail of our reward.

In conclusion, we may make the following remarks:—

(1.) *The whole subject confirms to us the certainty of the restoration and glory of the Jewish people.* That such restoration is foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures, there can be no question: has then our Lord given us reason to think the covenant is at an end, and the promises withdrawn? Quite the contrary. The whole course of His ministry, notwithstanding the low condition of the people in morals and religion, went to show the unchangeableness of God's purpose, and was for the very object of confirming, not annulling, the promises made to the fathers. Hence *all* that has been promised must be fulfilled. The Jewish nation must be gathered; the land must again be theirs; in them God must be glorified; through them the ends of the earth must receive the Gospel; and thus, in the seed of Abraham, must all the families of the earth be finally blessed. "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad."

(2.) *Let us learn to beware of thinking detail of little consequence, and of supposing that minute predictions, which may appear extraordinary, will not be literally and exactly fulfilled.*

The rigid adherence of the Divine procedure

to the arrangement originally laid down, as to the relative position and treatment of Jews and Gentiles, is quite contrary to what might have been expected in a system so spiritual as that of the Gospel. And the argument against the literal interpretation of the events which are to precede the Second Advent is equally fallacious, which is founded on the assumption that it is most unlikely such events should introduce the coming kingdom of the Son of God. But they are equally foretold, as were all the rest, and therefore *must be*. Strange, for instance, as it may probably seem according to *our* notions, that Elijah should come again; his appearance is part of God's arrangement. Christ's raising His saints; coming again to Mount Olivet; saving the Jews; destroying the nations; purifying the earth; reigning in Mount Zion; all these things may seem a very unnecessary hindrance and postponement of the eternity of ultimate glory, and remote from that ideal spirituality, in the indistinctness of which all the future is, with many minds, completely lost: but when we look at the place the Jew has held in all the past working out of salvation, these several circumstances only supply the just analogy in reference to its future fulfilment; and we still see the glory of our God gathered round a chain of means and circum-

stances, its material, so to speak, being still Jews and Gentiles, the links of which shall reach at least through the Millennial glory, and how much farther we know not.

Let us learn, therefore, to leave with God the choice of His materials and His means, and to receive, without prejudice, His own statement as to the way in which He will employ them. He "hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." It is natural, therefore, to suppose that the manner of His working will be, as it ever has been, contrary to merely human notions, and the reverse of what would be anticipated by human judgment. But the result will be the greater glory to Him, and the more blessed salvation to us; while the joyful acclamation of His people, on the review and in the experience of the whole, can only be, "He hath done all things well:" "Blessed be His glorious name for ever and ever!"

(3.) *The duty incumbent upon us to take a deep interest in the welfare of the Jewish people is specially enforced by the consideration of the*

present subject. Surely, if sympathy with the mind of God in all things is our highest privilege, His mind has been plainly enough revealed in reference to the house of Israel; and we can be at no loss how it becomes us to feel towards them. And again, if we desire the blessing of the Lord, it is clear the means of obtaining that blessing, as formerly expressed in the covenant with the fathers, has never been reversed: "I will bless them that bless thee." Seeing, then, that our Lord came to confirm the original covenant, and at once to prove God's veracity and to fulfil His promise, let it be our blessed privilege both to help in gathering in that remnant, which up to this time has ever attested His truth and faithfulness, and also to pray for and hasten on the day when Zion shall be glorified. So, when that day comes, we shall see the good of His chosen and rejoice in the gladness of His nation, and glory with His inheritance. And if no opposition or unbelief on the part of the Jews prevented the ministry of our Lord from being fulfilled to that people, or was assumed as the ground for curtailing their privileges, or depriving them of their great pre-eminence at His first coming, let us remember, that no similar conduct on their part can ever be *our* excuse now for negligence in proclaiming to them the Gospel

of grace. Nay, inasmuch as through their unbelief we have obtained mercy, our hearts ought to burn within us with the unquenchable desire, that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy.

(4.) *Lastly, let us examine carefully, whether we are receiving or rejecting the truth of God, and let us take heed lest we come into their condemnation.* If they, through unbelief, have been dying in their sins, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Well may we fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. Oh, when the Lord shall come again, how many nominal Christians will find the stripes of even the unbelieving Jew few in comparison of their own. Let, then, our clear knowledge of our Lord's will stir us up anxiously to seek a personal interest in His salvation, as well as to work while it is day. So shall the further purpose of the Father in the ministry of Jesus be fulfilled in us, even that the Gentiles should glorify Him for His mercy: and we who have come, whether from the east or the west, or the north or the south, shall sit down, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of our Father; and, Jews and Gentiles, rejoice together through Him that hath loved us. Amen.

LECTURE III.

THE REJECTION OF MESSIAH BY HIS OWN PEOPLE.

BY THE REV. T. R. BIRKS, M.A.,

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DANIEL IX. 26.

“ And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

THE truths, my Christian brethren, on which we are to meditate this evening, may be justly called the deep things of God. It is no easy task to approach them with due reverence. The press and fever of worldly pursuits in the present day, its intense activity in all things

human, and its blindness to those things which are Divine and eternal, are not favourable even to the claims of personal religion, and an earnest care for your own salvation. In these schemes of commerce and strifes of party, this flush of worldly hopes, or pressure of worldly anxieties and fears, how hard it is to feel that, in the nineteenth century, as in the days of Abraham, we are only strangers and pilgrims here below! How slowly we learn the truth, that our life is but a vapour, and our breath in our nostrils, that our days on earth are a shadow, and there is no abiding; and that our one business here is to be found in Christ, and to lay hold on life eternal! But it is still harder to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and to go on unto perfection. You cannot, without a struggle, in a worldly age, resist its powerful infection and seek the kingdom of God for yourselves. But the task is still more arduous, to overcome our spiritual selfishness, and, not resting content with personal safety and the sense of pardon, to labour for the cause of Christ, to meditate on the coming glory, to adore God for His own infinite goodness, and delight ourselves in His majesty and love and wisdom, in all His wonderful works to the children of men.

Such, however, is the duty to which we are

invited by the subject proposed for the lecture of this evening. Do not think that these parts of Divine truth are speculative and barren, and useless in the great work of practical religion. True, they are the deep things of God, and need to be approached with reverence; but then they will be life and strength to our souls. When was it that the heart of St. Paul was raised the highest in praise and adoration? Though his spirit was full charged, he could speak with calm solemnity of man's fall and misery, the nature of Christian faith, the obligation of Christian obedience, and the source and blessed fruits of Christian holiness. But when he entered on these mysteries of Providence, the blindness of the Jews and their long rejection, and the mercy that overflowed, on their fall, to the Gentile world, then the full vessel of his heart ran over, in tears of deep sorrow and songs of devout thanksgiving. He gave sudden utterance to his agony of grief, when he thought on the guilt and danger of his brethren, his kindred after the flesh, the branches of the olive-tree who were broken off, and perishing in their unbelief. But when he dwelt on the love of God, which, through their fall, had reconciled the world, and brought salvation to the Gentiles, then, where sorrow had abounded, joy and praise did much more exceed-

ingly abound. His tongue could no longer restrain the full tide of his emotions, while he exclaimed, in language like that of seraphim before the throne, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

We are now to meditate on the same awakening truth, which called forth this deep adoration in the apostle's heart,—the rejection of Messiah by his own people. May we enter on it in the like spirit of deep reverence and godly fear! To explain fully the remarkable prophecy from which the text is chosen would be more suited for a treatise than a public discourse. I shall rather confine myself to these outlines of thought, which the words naturally suggest;—the privileges and hopes of the Jews before Messiah's coming, their predicted unbelief, its fruits in their own rejection, and the solemn warning which God has given, by their fall, to the churches of the Gentiles in these last ages. And now may the Lord God of the holy pro-

phets bear witness to His own truth, and apply the message with power to every heart.

I. First, let us inquire, what were the privileges, hopes, and prospects of the Jewish nation before the coming of our Lord. Now, when the kingdom of God has been taken from them so long, and given to others, it is hard for us to recall the true state of the world and of the Jewish Church in those early times. Believers are now trained in a very different school, under opposite influences, and hence their views, on almost every part of Divine truth, are cast in another mould. We may own and feel, and in words we may perhaps maintain zealously, that we are saved by grace only, through faith. But how seldom do we enter into the reality of that great fact, in which the doctrine of grace becomes embodied, really and palpably, before our eyes; that, as Gentiles, we were all by nature "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," having, therefore, no hope, and "without God in the world!" How often have Gentile Christians, even amidst their imagined zeal for the doctrines of grace, boasted against the natural branches, and forgotten the wild olive-tree, from which God had taken them, to graft them against nature into the stock of Israel!

Let us transport ourselves backward, in thought, to those early days when David wrote the Psalms, or Isaiah received his visions. What must have been the views of a pious Israelite with regard to his own people? Around him he would see all the earth, with its mighty empires, plunged in gross idolatry and midnight darkness. He would see them, under visible tokens of God's displeasure, given up to walk blindly in their own ways. One spot alone was light, and that spot was the land of Israel. One people alone had the lively oracles of God, the messages of inspired truth, and that people were his own brethren, the children of Israel. He would turn to the law of God, that he might understand this deep mystery, and what truths would meet him at its threshold? He would read there that the whole world had sunk into ruin, and were rebels against their Maker; that mankind had once perished in the flood, and had sunk again into abominable wickedness. Amidst this ruin and darkness, the people of Israel alone have light in their dwellings. They, and they only, had been singled out from all nations, to keep truth and righteousness alive on the earth. Their forefather was so dear to God as to obtain a promise, sealed by an oath, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The

patriarch, whose name they bore, had held solitary intercourse with the God of Bethel; had received, in his earthly pilgrimage, the visits of angels; and, as a prince, had power with God, and had prevailed. The names of these holy men, he would also see, were now linked with the name of God himself in everlasting union, and Jehovah was become for ever the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel. Their pilgrimage on earth is recorded, in the perfect law of God, with a fulness tenfold greater than the creation of the world and the ruin of all mankind. At every step in the sacred history, the love of God to his people Israel would shine out more clearly to this pious Jew. He would hear that remarkable appeal, made to their own experience, and his heart would leap with gratitude and exultation. "Ask now of the days which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God essayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according

to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" He would catch the echo of that appeal, after four hundred years, from the lips of the sweet Psalmist and King of Israel;—"What one nation of the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou hast redeemed to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever, and thou, Lord, art become their God." Wonderful and surpassing honour, beyond all the triumphs of military ambition and worldly greatness! In the view of such privileges, well might Moses exclaim, "Happy art thou, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help and the sword of thine excellency; and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread on their high places!"

But, to gain a clearer view of these high privileges of the Jews, let us hear the description which the Holy Spirit has given of them, by the apostle of the Gentiles. They were "Israelites," the children of that favoured patriarch who saw the door of heaven opened, and heard the voice of the God of Bethel; one who was greeted on his journey

by the hosts of angels, and when he wept and made supplication, had power as a prince with God, and prevailed. To them pertained "the adoption." The message had been sent for their sakes, by the Almighty himself, to the proudest of kings: "Israel is my son, even my first born. Thus saith Jehovah, Let my son go, that he may serve me." The Holy Spirit takes pleasure in recounting this proof of God's favour to them, where he says to them, by the prophet Hosea, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Theirs also was "the glory." The pillar of cloud and fire went before them, by day and night, in all their journey; and when their elders went up into the mount, "the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." The same privilege of God's visible presence was continued in later times. For when the temple was built, and the voice of praise was heard, and "the priests and singers of Israel were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

The covenants also were theirs. The Gentile

churches, indeed, have spoken of two covenants, of works, and of grace, where no trace is left of this prerogative of Israel. But though this be in one sense a truth, it is truth distorted from its Scripture simplicity, and moulded into a human form. The two covenants, which the word of God reveals under that name, relate immediately to the Jewish people. The first, or old covenant, was made with them at the foot of Sinai. There the Lord spake to them by Moses, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . . And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." The second, or new covenant, announced by the prophet Jeremiah, is also made "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." It is openly contrasted with the former covenant, made with their fathers, when they came out of the land of Egypt. Its seal and pledge is the atoning blood of Christ; its privileges are all obtained through his one sacrifice; its blessings, in a large measure, are now extended to the Gentiles; but the covenant itself directly and clearly applies to repenting Israel in days still to come. Their rebellion, for ages, can-

not, it is true, suspend or stay the current of these rich mercies; and since they have put these promises away from them, they have overflowed to Gentile sinners; but their proper course, their natural application, is to the two houses of Judah and Israel. The promise is still outstanding, and when once they shall look, with godly sorrow, on Him whom their fathers pierced, that covenant will have power to blot out long ages of stubborn unbelief, and "their sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more." It is a covenant, in short, sealed and applied by that striking promise, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

Theirs, too, was "the giving of the law, and the service of God." For their sakes the Almighty came down in visible glory upon Mount Horeb, and from His right hand there went forth a fiery law for them. The tables of stone, the record of that law, were given to Moses, written with the finger of God himself. The temple was reared among them after a Divine pattern; and they alone, of all nations, had a perpetual service to the God of heaven in that holy sanctuary. The morning and evening sacrifice, the shewbread, and the sweet incense, were services which He

Himself had ordained, as the pledges of their daily communion with Jehovah, who dwelt between the cherubims. To them pertained also “the promises, and the fathers.” From the first call of Abraham, down to the last of the prophets, whenever a word of promise came from inspired lips, it spoke of God’s special love and favour to Israel. The same accents of joy seemed to be heard afresh, in every variety of tone—“All nations shall bless you, and ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.” Those holy men of God, from Abraham himself to Zacharias and the Baptist, in whom truth and righteousness were kept alive in the earth, all of them belonged to this favoured people, and threw a glory as of heaven around the whole nation. To crown these high privileges, the hope of the Messiah, the Deliverer of the world, was theirs by a special and peculiar covenant. The promised Seed of the woman, by whom sin and death were to be bruised, was to be also the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham; so that “of them as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

Such and so various, the Holy Spirit himself being witness, were the privileges of the Jewish people. How bright, then, must have been the hopes naturally cherished, from the days of Moses to those of

Daniel, by every pious Jew! He knew that God had singled out his nation from a lost and ruined world, for especial favour. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, loved them for the fathers' sakes, and had confirmed them to be a people to himself for ever. Prophets, in glowing language, spoke of days to come, when the Lord would arise upon Zion, and His glory should be seen over her; when Gentiles should come to her light, and their kings to the brightness of her rising. They taught, in plain language, that the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, was also to be the Son of David, the King of Israel. With what joy, then, and holy delight, would faithful Jews look forward to His coming, as the season of fullest happiness to the nation which they loved! This hope, long deferred, made their heart sick and faint with eager expectation; but when the desire came, surely it would be a tree of life to their souls. Then, as they fondly hoped, their nation would be freed at once from Gentile oppression; and, rising from the dust, under the sceptre of the Son of David, assume the sovereignty of the world. The fathers also, and the prophets, the glory of their country, who were sleeping in the grave, would then awake to share in the honour of their own children; and a kingdom be set up, which would break in pieces

all the proud kingdoms of the Gentiles, and endure for ever.

Alas! how small a part of the ways of God are seen, commonly, even by His true servants! These hopes, which seemed to rest on so firm a basis, were flattering and deceitful. Those who fancied for themselves such a scheme of Providence, with instant glory to Israel when Messiah should appear, forgot the mystery of iniquity, working amongst the chosen people, and saw but a small part of the mystery of God. There was a gulf of judgment, which they did not see, yawning before their guilty nation: there was a depth, and height, and breadth of mercy, which they never suspected, ready to dawn upon an astonished world. The last and highest privilege of God's people would prove, alas! to be their crowning sin; but would open the way for riches of Divine grace to Gentile sinners, beyond their highest hopes, and such as no human thought could ever have conceived. From them, as concerning the flesh, the Christ would assuredly come; but, alas! "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." The very time of His rejection is here foretold by the angel Gabriel, after which Messiah should be cut off, and they should no longer be His people.

II. This leads our thoughts to the next subject of our meditation,—the fatal unbelief of the Jews when Messiah came. He visited them in mercy; but they knew not the time of their visitation. The Prophets, who were read among them every Sabbath-day, had plainly foretold His works of love, and His bitter sufferings; but they knew not their voices, and fulfilled them in condemning Him. His forerunner, at the time predicted by Gabriel, proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; but they could not discern the signs of the times, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The appointed weeks were expired. The Messiah was cut off, and they were not His. The crown fell from their head; and all her beauty departed, for long ages, from the daughter of Zion.

This fearful change, although hidden from the Jews, had been long foretold in the types of the law, and by the plain warnings of the prophets. Ishmael, the natural seed of Abraham, and for several years his only child, foreshadowed the natural Israel, and their fall through unbelief. Long he had counted himself the heir of his father's wealth, and of the promises made to Abraham. But when the time of promise came, another son, born after the Spirit, succeeded to the birthright. Even when Abraham interceded for

Ishmael, the answer was still given, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And when, instead of submission, there was envy and bitter mockery, the voice of Sarah herself implied the future sentence on the unbelieving nation, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman."

The history of Joseph supplies another type and warning of the same truth. There we may see, in a lively figure, the Messiah, the chosen of God, envied and hated by His own brethren according to the flesh; yet exalted, in spite of their envy and murderous hatred, to a throne of glory. The guilty murderers are soon visited by the stroke of God. They are compelled to sojourn, as strangers, in the land where their brother, unknown to them, has the supreme power. Their brother's servants look on them with an evil eye, and they are accused as troublers of the land. Chastised, and yet preserved, punished, and yet increased with wealth, they are brought at last to a sorrowful repentance, and confession of their guilt. Then all the long-hidden love of their brother gushes out upon them, and his heart leaps to welcome them with tears of joy. How much hidden meaning, my brethren, is couched in that one word of the holy

martyr Stephen! "At the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren." "Wonder not," as if he had said, "that Jesus of Nazareth, in His first coming, has been rejected by our nation. It is at the second time, when He shall have received the kingdom, and their hearts shall be melted in godly sorrow, that He must be made known unto His brethren. You will not see Him again, till you shall say, even your whole nation, with mingled sorrow and joy, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!'"

There are many other types, on which the time forbids me to dwell. Moses, the lawgiver and mediator of Israel, rejected by his own people with scorn, and driven out to dwell in a Gentile tribe, but sent at last to be their ruler and deliverer; the yearly sin-offering, and the scape-goat sent into the wilderness; the high priest, who by his death released the fugitives from the cities of refuge; David, the anointed king of Israel, who was driven out by violence, and compelled to be a stranger from his own people; Jonah, who was three days and nights in the great deep, and afterwards raised up to be a preacher of repentance to the Gentiles; and Hezekiah, the captain of the Lord's people, who, after mortal sickness, went up on the third day into the house of the Lord;—all these prefigured the true Messiah of God, the sacrifice and High

Priest, the lawgiver, the prophet, and the King of His own people. Let us now turn to more direct and plainer prophecies, which announce to us the sufferings of Christ, and the unbelief of Israel.

And first, as St. Paul bears witness also, Moses had forewarned them of their sin and fall, in that song which was to be in the mouth of their children for ever: "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with them which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." As they forsook the true God for idols, so others, who were not a people, would be advanced and honoured above them, by the God of holiness, in punishment for their sin. The pride, nursed by a dispensation of privilege, was to be abased by a dispensation of judicial anger; while Gentiles, whom they had despised, were preferred in their room. Their offence lay deeper than the worship of visible idols, though this was a great part of their crime. But they had perverted God's mercies through their pride. They had thus framed an idol God in their hearts; one who was the God of the Jews only; a God who would exercise mercy without holiness to them, and holiness without mercy or love to the rest of mankind. This was a spiritual image of jealousy in the very gate of the temple, which

provoked the anger of Jehovah against them, and brought on them a punishment exactly suited to avenge the crime. May we, my brethren, never be guilty of repeating their sin, in a different form! May we never frame to ourselves, like too many Christians, a false God, who has love only for us and an elect Church, and anger, without any love, for the world at large, and the outcasts of unbelieving Israel!

The same warning is often repeated in the later prophets. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and heard the voices of the seraphim in their holy worship, a message was given him, to announce the blindness of his own people Israel, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." And when the prophet, grieved with the tidings, put the question, "Lord, how long?" he receives the answer, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." So also the Lord declares to them, by the same prophet, that He himself would be "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel, a gin and snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;" that they

would stumble and fall, and be broken, and snared, and taken; that in their affliction they would fret themselves, and curse their King and their God; that they should look on their land, and find trouble and sorrow, and dimness of anguish, and be driven into darkness. In another vision they are warned that the Lord would lay in Zion "a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Then the scornful men, who should be the rulers in Jerusalem, should find their covenant disannulled, and themselves be trodden down by the overflowing scourge, in that hour of God's strange and terrible judgment.

In the forty-ninth chapter the same warning is repeated, in a message from the Son of God to the Gentiles and the islands of the sea. His first work on which the Father would send Him, would be to restore Jacob, and to gather Israel unto Him. But, while employed in this work of mercy, He utters the grievous complaint, "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." Soon, in spite of their unbelief, a fresh promise is set before Him by His heavenly Father, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." In the following chapter He shows, in still plainer terms, the manner of His rejection, and

the contemptuous treatment He would receive from His unbelieving brethren. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

In a later vision, the Spirit combines these different warnings into one glowing prophecy of Messiah's sufferings and rejection. First, he extols the glory of Emmanuel in His works of love. "Behold! my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." He then seems to pause in wonder at the strange vision of this Man of sorrows. "Many were astonished at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." At length he utters that exclamation of surprise and grief at the blindness of Israel, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him: He is despised and rejected of men."

Even this full description of Messiah's sufferings, when He would be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and be dumb like a sheep before the shearers, when His grave should be with the wicked, and

he would be with the rich man in His death, was not enough to complete the merciful warning of the Spirit of God. He saw fit to announce also the very time of Messiah's appearance, when He would become a sacrifice for sin, and His people, rejecting their Prince and Saviour, would be His no more. Seven weeks of years, from the decree for restoring Jerusalem, were to be occupied, as Gabriel's message implies, in repairing the ruined city of Jerusalem and commonwealth of Judah. Sixty-two weeks, after these, were to be passed in straitness of times under Gentile oppression. These two periods together, sixty-nine weeks of years, or 483 years, will reach from the decree which Ezra brought to Jerusalem to the year marked by St. Luke for the ministry of John, our Lord's herald and forerunner, when that message begun—"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent and believe the glad tidings." Messiah, the Prince, having fulfilled all righteousness, entered now on His work of salvation and deliverance. One week more of Israel's unbroken covenant, and then the whole time would have been complete, and everlasting righteousness have rested on the nation, in the fulness of an eternal blessing. But, in that crisis of their history, sin and unbelief prevailed. "He came unto His own, and His own received

Him not." He would have gathered their children, and they refused to be gathered. They rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The staff of beauty, as predicted by Zechariah, was broken in His person, who is fairer than the children of men, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. They knew not the time of their visitation, nor that one week of repentance might have landed them in the national enjoyment of everlasting righteousness. Before that last week had closed, they cut themselves off from the covenant; and the week itself was cancelled from the reckoning, to be completed only when the national covenant should be renewed, in the last days, after a long and wearisome delay. When we look for the angel to speak of the joyful consummation, we hear an opposite strain, of sin, sorrow, and judgment. "And after the threescore and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, and they shall not be His; and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end will be with a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined." Then after this long delay, the last week, broken off, like the Jews themselves, from the reckoning of God's covenant, appears once more, to finish their actual transgression and make an end of their sin, and apply the great sacrifice to the

nation, in its blessed fruits of everlasting righteousness, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and the determined judgment, shall be poured on the desolator."

III. Thus full and various is the testimony of the Spirit beforehand to that great fact, the rejection of Messiah by God's ancient people. Let us now consider the bitter fruits of their sin, in their own national rejection from the covenant of God. There are many passages where their punishment is foretold; but perhaps nowhere more clearly than in these words of the angel to the beloved seer, after his earnest intercession and prayer for Israel. It is one part of the mercy of our God, when he hears and answers the prayers of His people, to teach them first the depth of their misery, and the mighty hindrances which His grace must overcome to bestow the blessing. Let us hearken, then, to these words of Gabriel. Every sentence is weighty with the doom of immortal souls; and the pride, which had been nursed by ages of privilege, is here crushed beneath the powerful hammer of the word of God.

And, first, when Messiah is cut off, the sentence on the murderers follows without delay. "They shall not be His." True, the message of grace was still sent to them, as to sinners of the Gentiles, and the charge was given to the apostles to begin at Jerusalem. But the old covenant, which bound the whole nation to God, was now rent, like the veil of the temple, for ever. They had sealed their own rejection, when they exclaimed, in their ignorance and blindness of heart, "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him! We have no king but Cæsar! His blood be on us and on our children." The staff of beauty was broken on the cross, to break the covenant which the Lord had made at Sinai with all the people. The invitations of mercy still hovered around them with peculiar tenderness, but it was only the rich glow of a departing sunset, to be soon quenched in fearful and midnight gloom. Many of them might still be saved, but from an untoward generation, who had sinned away the inheritance of their fathers. The whole nation might hereafter be recovered, but not until the times of restitution, when they should repent of their heinous sin, and the tabernacle of David be builded up anew from its ruin in the dust. There was still, as with the Canaanites, a reprieve of judgment for

forty years, while the infant Church was gaining strength for its future triumphs; but then the cup of their sin was full, and the wrath came upon them to the uttermost. O fearful results of abused mercy! That very blessing which closed the list of their high privileges, itself the highest and noblest of them all, the coming of Messiah as their own brother in the flesh, turned through unbelief into the heaviest curse. It was the knell of their fondest hopes, the death-warrant that sealed their ruin. Even before the Roman eagles were seen mustering for the bloody carnage, the eye of faith could weep in secret places for their pride—the spiritual desolation was begun. Already Ichabod was written on their glory, and the crown had fallen from the head of the daughter of Zion.

But their spiritual fall was soon followed by outward judgments. “The people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary.” When nations forsake the God of their mercies, sooner or later His sore judgments will be sent against them. The rulers who, in their counsels, reject and crucify the truth of God, may look for the scourge of famine, or the voice of the trumpet and the alarm of war, to reprove their ungodliness. O, why should Christians be found to palliate or justify the sin, when Christ, the Truth, is rejected and set aside on the

high places of national power! as if our God were the God of the valleys only, and not of the mountains also! as if He were to be honoured in the retreats of private and domestic life, and had no claim to have His word obeyed and revered in the counsels of rulers, and on the throne of Kings! It was the rejection of Christ by the public rulers of the Jews, which brought on their national ruin. That precious corner stone was set at nought and refused by the builders, and became the stumbling stone, upon which the people fell, and were broken. A nation of fierce countenance came against them from the end of the earth, swift as the eagle flieth, and regarded not the person of the old, neither showed favour to the young. The King sent his armies, and destroyed the murderers of His Son, and burnt up their city. And thus the warning of Isaiah was a second time fulfilled against Jerusalem. "Her gates shall lament and mourn; and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground."

And the end shall be with a flood. These words were doubly fulfilled in the day of Judah's ruin. There was a flood of ungodliness and violence among the Jews themselves, such as had scarcely been witnessed since the days of Noah. This was soon followed by a flood of Divine vengeance, and the desolation that marked the footsteps of the

Roman armies. That moral deluge swept away, in one hour, the privileges and hopes of two thousand years, the laws of Moses, the covenant of their fathers, and the temple of their God, which He Himself had solemnly abandoned. Their land had seemed, for ages, the one green islet of hope and peace in a stormy world; but now the waves and billows of Divine vengeance passed over it. No state, no kingdom was now left in the whole earth, to bear a public witness for the God of heaven. The truth, driven out from its former ark of refuge, had to wander as a weary pilgrim through a waste of idolatrous wickedness; and, like the dove, could find no rest for the sole of her foot, no settled home, or quiet resting-place, among all the tribes and kingdoms of this fallen world.

And until the end of the war desolations are determined. These words are commonly applied to the warfare of Titus, which brought on the fall of the city and temple. But the end of that war was only the beginning of the desolation. The clause ought, therefore, to be explained in a wider sense. Between the prince that was to come and fulfil the judgment, or the Roman power, and Messiah himself, the Prince of the host, there was to be a long warfare, a spiritual conflict between the Church of Christ and the Roman world. This

war would cease only when the seventh trumpet should sound, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord. Till that day, Rome, whether Heathen, Papal, or Infidel, would maintain a lasting conflict with the truth of Christ. Until the end of this long warfare, desolations are determined against the city and sanctuary. Jerusalem must be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Then, when Babylon shall with great violence be cast down, and be found no more, the determined desolations will cease, and loud hallelujahs in heaven will proclaim the return of mercy to the mourners of Israel. The voice of God will then go forth in accents of peace, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins!" Then, too, will all the promises of joy and hope be fulfilled after the long desolation. "For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness as Eden, and her desert as the garden of the Lord: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

IV. And now, my brethren, let us consider lastly, the great lessons which should be learned from this unbelief of the Jews, for a warning to the whole Gentile Church and to every believer, in these last days. These things, we are assured, happened unto them for examples, and are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come. May we all have wisdom to profit by these examples of unbelief; and instead of boasting against the branches, look up for pardon, and entreat for grace, lest we also should be cut off, in our turn, from the covenant of God.

What, then, were the secret causes of their grievous fall? How was it that a nation, beloved of God, and so highly favoured, could sink into so deep a ruin? In whatever light we view their sin, it will furnish a warning and lesson to ourselves.

First, let us see clearly that privileges, long abused, must bring on heavy judgments. They had been favoured above all nations, but these very mercies of God had made them proud and careless. They boasted that they were Abraham's seed, and said in their pride of heart, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we." But they took no heed to tread in the

steps, or do the works of Abraham, nor to keep the Lord's temple clean from the pollutions of sin. Thus their table itself, loaded with privileges, became a snare to them; they were exalted to heaven, and yet were cast down to hell. The repairs of their temple, by Herod and others, were scarcely finished, when the Roman ploughshare passed over it, and not one stone was left on another. Their spiritual pride was at its height, when it plunged them suddenly into utter ruin.

My brethren, have we nothing to learn from this just severity of God? Just as long as the interval, in the usual reckoning, from the descent of Jacob to Egypt till the fall of Jerusalem, so long is the time from that fall of the Jews to the present year. The privileges of the Gentile Church have been greater than those of Israel, and they have now continued fully as long. But we have copied, alas! too closely the sins of Israel. Are there none to be found who exclaim, in a spirit as proud as theirs, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we?" Spiritual pride may assume different forms. Sometimes its language may be, We, we only are the Catholic Church; and sometimes again, We, we only are the consistent Protestants, the true Gospel and

Bible Christians. Blessed and holy titles are all these, if only living fruits of faith bear witness to their reality. But if these holy names are only a covert for spiritual pride, a pretext for envy and strife and bitterness, and the works of the flesh, then be sure that they are an abomination in the sight of God. If, while we boast of catholicity, we are sectarian in spirit, and narrow-hearted to all beyond our own pale; if we claim to be, more than others, Gospel Christians, and still are lamentably wanting in the spirit of grace, then may we fear that the titles we assume, like the Jews before us, may only turn to our greater condemnation. Every privilege we enjoy will aggravate our guilt, unless it quickens us in faith and real holiness. From him that hath not will be taken away even that which he seemeth to have; and all the various boasts of Gospel light, and Christian liberty, and apostolic order, will bear witness against us at the last, if they leave us with a barren heart, and a life unfruitful in the works of righteousness.

Let us be warned, then, my brethren, by this example of the Jews. Never let us be content to be hearers of God's word, unless we be doers also, nor boast of our privileges, when we should rather mourn that we have not improved them.

As Christians, favoured with richer grace than the saints of the Old Testament, let us strive to surpass them in love to God, in gentleness, meekness, and long suffering. As Protestants, let us not boast that we are free from outward idols, and vain traditions of men, but purge ourselves from the subtle idols of the heart, pride, covetousness, and worldly pleasure, and use our free liberty of access to the word of God, by searching deeply for truth as for hid treasures. As Churchmen, let us show that our love for apostolic order is true and genuine, by eminent forbearance, and love, and affection, towards all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; knowing that this is the new commandment of Christ, repeated by His apostles, to love one another. If any are members of an Established Church, let them be careful that their hearts too may be established, not with meats and ceremonies, but with grace. If others belong to one which claims to be free, let them not be the slaves of strife and a bitter tongue, nor use their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but prove their freedom by the overflowing fulness of their Christian love. How many watchwords of spiritual warfare, now current in the Gentile Churches, may serve to condemn those who use them for vain boasting! “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

We may learn, secondly, from the rejection of the Jewish people, the fearful punishment of open and of secret idolatry. When they worshipped the golden calf at the foot of Horeb, that sentence was uttered, "In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." This transgression, and their worship of Moloch in the wilderness, were punished long after, as Amos declares, by the captivity of Babylon. The song of Moses goes still further; for we are taught there that one cause of their final rejection was their open idolatry in the land of Canaan, when they sacrificed so long to the gods of the heathen.

We also, in our days, should apply this lesson to our own hearts. Think not, because we are free, as Protestants, from outward idols, that the God of holiness will be pleased with mere railing against Papal corruptions, where there is no humiliation for our own iniquity. The Pharisees had no visible idols, when they said proudly, "If we had been in our fathers' days, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." But there were idols in their hearts, and because of these, the sins of their fathers, as well as their own, were visited upon them. If British Christians, in these days, are covetous in heart, if they are lovers of pleasure more than of God, and serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own sensual

desires, then the idolatry of our forefathers, in the days of image-worship, may still be visited on them and the whole nation. The God whom we serve is a jealous God. He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. Their boasted freedom from open idolatry was one snare which deceived the Jews, and led to their ruin. Let not us, my brethren, be thus deceived. O, little would it avail us in the great day, that we have never offered our prayers to saints and the virgin, and bowed our knees to an image of wood or stone, if in our hearts we have made fine gold our confidence, and thus come under that fearful sentence, "No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

The fall of the Jews was brought on, further, by their corrupt and carnal abuse of temporal blessings. Many of God's promises to them related to the things of this life. Their earthly minds fixed upon these, and neglected the higher and better promises which were joined with them. Hence, in their view of Messiah's glory, they dwelt chiefly on outward things, victory, wealth, and abundance, and neglected the chief excellence of His kingdom, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And thus, when our Saviour

set before them the manna of His heavenly grace, their soul turned away with loathing from this light bread, and hankered after the fleshpots of Egypt. They sought him, when on earth, not because of the miracles but of the loaves; and when the Gospel was preached to them by the Spirit of God, they rejected the gifts as too ethereal for their sensual hearts to relish, and perished in their unbelief.

There is a similar, yet opposite danger, to which the Gentile Churches are exposed. The blessings offered in the Gospel are spiritual and heavenly. But as the promises of the old covenant were abused, to awaken carnal hopes and desires, these higher gifts may also be perverted, so as to awaken a spiritual pride not less dangerous. We may lose ourselves in metaphysical disputes, and neglect plain duties. We may boast in a barren orthodoxy of creed, and pass over judgment, mercy, and faith, and the living fruits of the Gospel. We may deceive ourselves with a spurious and false spirituality, in will worship and despising of the body, in airy speculation and intellectual trifling in theology, while we are too proud to believe the promises, simply as God has revealed them. It is not really spiritual to despise anything that God has made, or that the Son of God came down from

heaven to redeem. If the Jews had need to beware of carnal hopes and an earthly mind, the Gentile Churches have equal need to beware of philosophy and vain deceit, and to dread, as one of the worst dangers, a dry and scholastic trifling, under spiritual names, in the things of God.

Self-righteousness, again, was one main cause of Jewish unbelief. The apostle insists strongly on this truth, "Being ignorant of God's righteousness," he tells us, "and going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God." The law was their peculiar honour. But their pride abused it from its true purpose, which was to convict them of sin, to lead them to prayer for mercy, to direct their hopes to Christ, and then to be their guide in holy obedience. The law, thus opposed to Divine grace, was a snare and stumbling-block, and filled them with a vain confidence. They were zealous for its outward rites; but their hearts were left full of pride, deceit, and ungodliness.

Here, also, the Christian Church is exposed to a similar, but opposite evil. It is true, when the gospel was perverted into a round of Church ceremonies, a kind of mockery of the Jewish law, the corruption was the same as before, and self-righteousness was the prevailing sin. But

the gospel is, in its own nature, a contrast to the law of God. The one appeals to man's strength, the other to his weakness. The one declares his duty, and reminds him that he is one made in the image of God; the other unveils his weakness and dependence, and teaches him that he is only dust and ashes, clay fashioned by the hand of the potter. The corruption to which they lead is thus opposite also. Self-righteousness was the besetting sin of the Jews. But wherever the gospel is really known, the besetting sin of the Christian Church is a licentious and antinomian abuse of Divine grace.

Here, again, the example of the Jews is a fearful warning. When their self-righteous abuse of the law came to its height, it was met and exposed by a manifestation of grace, in the Son of God, which revealed the extent of the evil, and issued in their speedy rejection from God's covenant. We stand on the verge of a similar change. Christians, in their turn, have perverted the grace of God, till the conscience of millions is become dead to the absolute need of real, heart holiness. Sometimes the evil takes a doctrinal form. Believers are then taught that they have nothing to do with the commands and the threatenings, but with the promises alone; and that Christ has obeyed for them, to free them

from all obligation to obey. The most hateful licentiousness may thus claim, as the opposite error among the Jews, to be the pinnacle of gospel orthodoxy. But the evil, in its practical shape, is far wider, and has overspread the whole Church. That vague, unmeaning trust in the mercy of God, which is made to quiet the conscience in the indulgence of every sin; that dead faith, which rests content without any practical obedience; that spurious benevolence, which feigns to itself a God, too gentle and kind even to punish sin, have now infected millions in the visible Church, and are fast ripening the nations for a terrible judgment. For, just as the self-righteous abuse of God's law was detected, when it reached its height, by the display of mercy and grace in our blessed Saviour; so, when the abuse of the gospel has reached its height in the licentious self-will of the last days, and the boastings of scoffers, it will be detected and exposed by the kingdom of righteousness, when our Lord will punish His enemies, and render to every one according as his work shall be. O that we all may profit by the warning! May we never pervert the Gospel to our own ruin; but work out our salvation with fear and trembling; and be only encouraged to greater diligence by that further truth, that it is God himself who

worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Let us have grace,—grace in all its freedom, its fulness, its joy, and quickening power; yet never let us turn it into an opiate for a guilty conscience, but use it for its great end, that we may “serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; because even our God is a consuming fire!”

Ignorance of the word of prophecy was the last cause of Israel's ruin. They knew not the voices of the prophets which were read among them every Sabbath-day. The vision of all became to them as the words of a book that was sealed. This was a crowning evil, because it shut out the hope of a cure. Had they given heed to those warnings, they might have discovered their danger, while the door of mercy was still open. They might have learned how perilous were the very privileges of which they boasted; and instead of saying proudly, “We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage,” might have humbled themselves at the footstool of God's mercy, and obtained forgiveness. Instead of reasoning, “If we had been in our fathers' days, we would not have been partakers of their sins,” they would each one of them have owned with David, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity!” and the whole nation would have

offered up David's prayer, "Remember not against me the sins of my youth, nor my former transgressions." They might then have turned from their carnal hopes and self-righteous confidence, to a humble trust in pardoning mercy, and spiritual desires after heavenly grace. But those warnings of the prophets were sealed from them by their pride, and all was darkness. They could then dream of conquest on the verge of ruin, and boast of their privileges when all were just ready to pass away. Like Jonah, they could sleep and dream on, when the tempest was howling around them, and ready to burst in judgment on their heads. The vision was sealed; and thus the remedy became useless, which might have disclosed their danger, and saved them from the ruin.

My Christian brethren, let us lay seriously to heart this example given for our instruction by the Spirit of God. We do well to take heed to the sure word of prophecy, as a light that shineth in a dark place, "until the day dawn and the day-star shall arise." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." What multitudes despise the command! How few are now awake and alive to that great and central prophecy,—“the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!” How

many neglect or despise His own message,—
“Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that keepeth his garments and watcheth!” How many, even in this time of silent preparation, when all the earth seems to be still and at rest, forget the awakening truth,—“There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered!” How few enter into the meaning of that glorious promise, which ought to shine brighter and brighter before our eyes in these latter times, like a rainbow of heaven,—
“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. Upon such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years!” And even amidst the many signs which are around us of Israel’s approaching redemption, how few they are who dwell on that glorious hope,—“Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. . . . The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. At that time shall Jerusalem be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem, and they shall walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo!

I come and dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas. For as the new heaven and the new earth which I create shall remain, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain !”

Wonderful, blessed promises ! exceeding great, and very precious to the Church of God ! Be not ignorant, my brethren, of their meaning. Let no human systems, and no Gentile pride, lead you, like the Jews, to explain away into mere figures these true sayings of God. Purify your hopes from every carnal element, but beware that you do not refine them into a shadow without life and power. Realities, glorious realities, are at hand. The word of God has revealed them ; the providence of God, by many signs, is confirming them ; the long desolation of Zion is a pledge of their truth. The Jews would not believe a message of free mercy to the days of the Gentiles, and their unbelief has been their ruin. Beware that you do not neglect promises, still more various, of a coming kingdom of righteousness, in which glory, honour, and peace, shall again be restored to

Israel. Search the Scriptures with an earnest and simple mind, that you may know the glorious hopes which are dawning on these latter days. Let no contempt for the outcasts of Judah lead you to doubt the promise, that "the Lord will arise and have mercy on Zion," and that the mountains of Israel shall shoot forth their branches to welcome the wanderers to their earthly home, the type and shadow of a heavenly glory, soon to be revealed. Let nothing obscure from you the faithful record, that the blessed feet, which were nailed for us to the cross, shall yet stand upon the Mount of Olives. When God has revealed so much concerning His own thoughts and purposes of love, to rest content in ignorance can be neither right, nor safe, nor profitable for our souls. Search, then, the Scriptures, but search them with an humble mind, and with an obedient and believing heart. The Pharisees could reveal to Herod the birthplace of Messiah, and yet they rejected him when he came. Oh, then, let us not be content to know the promises made to Israel, or to have a clear view of the glorious kingdom of God. Let us add also to our knowledge temperance and patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Be warned by the sin and fall of Israel; and if you are

persuaded, by the sure word of prophecy, that the coming of the Lord is at hand, be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless, in the day of His appearing!

LECTURE IV.

THE SERVANTS WAITING FOR THEIR ABSENT MASTER: THEIR OCCUPATIONS AND TEMPTATIONS.

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LUKE XIX. 11—27.

“ And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was

returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin : For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow : Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto

you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."

IF we could realize the actual presence and voice of the Saviour addressing these words to us, "Occupy till I come;" or if we could discover that the time of our Lord's absence was expired, and that in a few hours we must render an account of our stewardship, with what solemn feelings should we listen to the message of the Most High God! And surely it is our duty and privilege thus to call faith to its realizing power, that we may all receive the message of the Gospel in the spirit of obedient children, and wait for our Lord's return with all the feelings of attached and watchful servants.

It is most important to note the *occasion* on which our Lord spoke any of his parables, seeing that they were generally adapted to existing circumstances; and hence we may expect that the great moral of the parable will bear on the time and the persons with whom the Saviour was conversant. Thus in the eleventh verse of this chapter, we have the occasion clearly defined, on which the interesting

words of our text were spoken. The disciples were now approaching the highly-favoured but ungrateful city; and they seem to have been inoculated with the Jewish mistake, that the Messiah was at once to enter Jerusalem in triumph, as the King of Israel, and the Sovereign of the whole earth. They had not as yet received the gift of spiritual discernment, and therefore they confounded all the prophecies which held out the prospect of Messiah's appearance, into one general view of his triumph, and their national exaltation. With our light and advantages, we may think it strange how they passed over the many indications of his previous sufferings; but when we reflect on the unwillingness of the human mind to contemplate sorrow, and how much the prospect of earthly glory fascinates the affections which grovel here below, we need not be so much surprised. In their low condition of spirituality,—just emerging from Jewish traditions, it is not wonderful that they should pass over the conflict which the Scriptures of truth declared must be the portion of Christ and his Church, before the kingdom of perfect joy should appear. And it was to disabuse the disciples of this confusion; to place all things in their right position; to prepare for the heavy struggle with the powers of darkness, before the triumph could

be expected: it was, I say, to give to prophecy its due order, and thus to train the Church to look for things according to God's arrangement, that the Lord spoke this and similar parables.

May we have light within,—the gift of the only effectual Teacher,—to receive this word according to the mind of God! May the blessed Spirit of truth take away all carnal prejudice and vain preconceptions, so that, leaving the element of human systems, we may calmly but joyfully fix our gaze on that glorious kingdom, which shall yet extirpate all others, and make this world the paradise of joy, instead of being, as it now is, the Babel of the worldling, and the Massah of the godly!

To depict the true standing of his Church, its subordination to his authority, its privileges and duties, the Saviour adopts many figures and similitudes, drawn from ordinary life; and perhaps none more effective, none more tangible, none, in fact, more bearing on our every-day's walk, than that of a household. For this being a condition of relationship with which almost all men have to do, we sympathize at once with the kind of union herein portrayed; and we can easily pass from the well-defined duties of both master and servant, to the higher privileges of the

household of faith. With respect to the Great Master of the spiritual family, we learn that Christ only occupies the place of Supreme Head, none having any share in the authority which belongs to him; so that the subordinate members of the household must listen to his voice as decisive, from which there is no appeal; ever remembering his own declaration, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren,"* a declaration which was evidently intended to limit human authority, and to exalt the will and word of Christ to the place of absolute supremacy. Nor yet must we pass over, in the character of this great Master, the *tenderness* with which he is animated towards all his household, and the care he exercises in attending to all their wants. This would be, indeed, to forget the loveliest feature of our Lord's Headship. He is supreme in love as well as in power; and it is here that we most especially observe the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly Master. There may be in the former (and there often is) much of real affection, compassion, and attention; but when compared with the unwearied love of Christ, with his unselfish kindness, with the incessant attention he pays to the wants and miseries of his people, then we may

* Matt. xxiii. 8.

reasonably say, the earthly has no glory, by reason of the glory which excelleth.

With respect to the members of this household, they are not only *subordinate* to the Great Head, but they are *co-ordinate* one with another; that is to say, they are not only introduced into this family, to be placed under the safe guidance and gentle control of the Lord Christ, but also for the mutual help and comfort one of another. In this view they hold a double relationship; to the Lord, they are joined by this tie of holy and willing service, and to their fellow-Christians, they are related as members of the same body, whose duty and whose privilege it is to afford all help and sympathy; so that it ought to be, in this family above all others, "when one member suffers, they all suffer."

All, however, who have read our Lord's parables with attention, must have observed that he has not adopted the *beau ideal* of a family, or of a vineyard, or of a sheep-fold; that is, what they might possibly be in their state of greatest perfection, but rather what these things are found to be in this present state of imperfection. We always find that mixture of good and evil, that combination of baneful and excellent which belongs to earthly unions, set forth in the picture which our Lord gives of the Church

in this sinful and sorrowful world. And hence it would seem impossible to understand these portions of Scripture, without having a clear and definite view of the Church, both in its *outward form* and in its *spiritual life*. In the latter, we contemplate that mystical union which exists between Christ,—the source of life,—and all the sons of Adam who have been delivered from their death in sin, and brought into the light of life. In the former, we consider rather the principles professed, the badges maintained, and the great object for which men coalesce in one corporate body. To deny the *visibility* of the Church, is to pass away from the element of thought which so eminently pervades our Lord's discourses; and yet to confound this with its inward life, is to lose the spirituality of Christ's religion. It is to forget the animating soul in contemplating the well-constructed body. I am fully persuaded that until we have correct views of the Church, in its twofold character of spirituality and visibility, we cannot understand a large portion of the Bible, and especially the parables of our blessed Lord and Saviour.

In discussing more closely the subject which has been allotted to me in the present Course, I would consider,—First, in what sense Christ is absent from his Church, and the purpose

thereof; secondly, what are the more prominent duties of his people during that absence; and, thirdly, the temptations to which, as his servants, they are specially exposed.

I. When we speak of Christ's absence, we can only refer to it in a *bodily* sense,—since all who hold the true and orthodox view of Christ's essential Deity must confess, and that with joy, that where two or three are met together in his name, there he is in the midst of them. As God he is everywhere present, he is about our bed and our table, with us in light and in darkness, and to take wings and escape from that awful presence is an impossibility. But the Scriptures speak of God's dwelling with man in a peculiar way, and, therefore, gave intimation of it from the beginning. When we read, that “the *seed* of the woman” was to bruise the serpent's head, we are also taught to expect that this deliverer was to be something more than human. When we hear of the great Prophet which Jehovah was to raise up like unto Moses, we have frequent intimations that he was to be listened to with a reverence that man could scarcely claim: and so throughout the early prophecies concerning the Messiah, there are many hints, that whilst he was raised up from the human family, he was to possess properties of

a higher kind than any created being ever enjoyed. Whether we should have seen all this in the angel that went before Israel in the wilderness, or in the captain of the host of the Lord who appeared to Joshua, without the light of the New Testament, may be doubted, and yet, as the discoveries of prophecy advanced, the names given to this great deliverer, and the work which he was yet to execute, seem to point him out as the Holy One of Israel. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,"*—a text which has been subjected to the most captious criticism, and yet, with all, the truth comes forth, that Messiah was to unite in himself the reality of our nature with all the essence of Deity, thereby showing that he, and he only, could be designated *Immanuel*,—God with us. And this name, so glorious in itself and so full of meaning, is elucidated to us by the New Testament light: it is there we read, that the very Word who was with God, and was God, took hold of our nature and joined it to his own in one person, so that now it could be said, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as

* Isaiah ix. 6.

of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* Need I say, that all the inspired apostles enunciated the same momentous truth as the very key-stone of Christianity, and that, therefore, the sum and substance of their testimony was comprehended in St. Paul's short, but all-important declaration, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

So far, it may be said, all orthodox Christians are agreed, since all admit, at least in terms, the great doctrine of Christ's incarnation; and yet it may be much questioned whether the views of many are full and consistent on this subject. It is one thing merely to hold a dogma correctly in our confession of faith without further application, and another to see its suitability to our wants and its harmony with the whole range of revelation. Thus, as touching the person of Christ, what vague views must men have of it, when the question has been mooted, whether the Lord carried our nature into heaven, and whether the Divine Persons of the Trinity will continue throughout eternity? Or, again, when men inquire, Why make so much of the *bodily presence* of the Lord and of his literal coming? may we not be satisfied that we have his presence *always* with us, and, if he is pleased to

* John i. 14.

give us the largest measure of his Spirit, would not this world partake of millennial blessedness, and, therefore, need we crave anything more?

All this proclaims a sad confusion of thought,—a mingling up of things totally distinct,—a losing sight of the full and final intentions of God in sending “his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” It was not only for our actual redemption that the incarnation was necessary,—so that, without shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sins; but in all that appertains to the display of God’s glory,—the recovery of man to his once glorious position, and the ultimate blessedness for which this world is destined,—all are intimately linked with the person of Christ.

Let us only observe the pains which our Lord took to give his apostles correct views of his intended absence, when he was about to close his short but expressive ministry by the mysterious sufferings of the cross. Lest they should suppose that he had really forsaken them, when he ascended up on high, we find him leaving the gracious promise, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;” and then he adds, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”* Thus intimating, that the fulness of spiritual joy should be retained to them, and

* John xiv. 16, 18.

that his presence should still remain with them,—so far as that expression means,—*the manifestation of God to the soul*. But did the Saviour permit them to forget his *bodily* presence?—did he convey the thought that his actual return was of no moment, because they had the Comforter's indwelling power? On the contrary, he always pointed them to his personal coming as the great hope of a suffering Church,—as the cheering expectation to which they were to cling in buffeting “with the waves of this troublesome world.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”* And the same truth is held out in several of our Lord's parables, whether he dwells on the wise virgins, with well-trimmed lamps, waiting for the Bridegroom's arrival, or considers the awful separation which the great Master of the field will make between the tares and the wheat in the day of his coming,

* John xvi. 20, 22.

or, as in our parable, contemplates the servants endued with several responsibilities which they are to occupy until the arrival of the great Master of the household from his distant, but most momentous journey. In all these passages of Scripture, and many more that might be cited from our Lord's discourses and the apostolic writings, the Church, so far from being taught that she has done with the Saviour's humanity, is ever more led on to the great ultimatum of all,—the return of that very Saviour who was once extended on the cross and was laid in the grave,—the manifestation of the God-man in all that glory which shall be given to him and his beloved Church as the fruit of his obedience and sufferings at his first coming.

In the very opening of this parable we have a definite reply to a question raised in this the first part of my subject, viz., for what purpose did our Lord leave his sorrowing Church? and why should his bodily presence be removed from his people, if so important as we maintain it is? The answer, I say, is in the twelfth verse,—“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.” This, doubtless, refers to the well-known fact, that rulers and governors, who were permitted to occupy the position of tributary kings by the

Roman Emperor, were obliged to appear at the chief seat of rule and to have their authority confirmed by the mandate of imperial authority, and thus to return to their far distant kingdom with all the weight of delegated power.* Without, then, dwelling on the importance of our Lord's ascension in reference to the gift of the Spirit, we have here a distinct reason for his absence, viz., that he was to receive the appointment from the Father himself to that peculiar kingdom which he should yet set up in this world,—which should be established at our Lord's return in glory,—a kingdom distinct from all earthly ones, because of its unsullied purity, and yet not to be confounded with either the sovereignty that belongs to God, the Judge of all, nor yet with the Gospel kingdom which preceded it, and which is identified with the dispensation of the Spirit.

The kingdom which our Lord received in the sense of *authority* at his ascension, and which he will yet reveal at his second coming, is more easily understood by comparing the eighth Psalm with the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Psalmist asks the question,—“What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For

* See “Horne's Introduction,” vol. iii. page 110.

thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." If we ask in what sense is he thus dignified? the answer is, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field." Now, if we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle expressly applies all this to our Lord Jesus—declaring that the Father did not put in subjection the world to come (την οικουμενην την μελλουσαν) to the angels, but only to the Son—and yet "we do not *now* see all things put under him;" this has not as yet taken place, but this much we do see—"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." So that we have seen the humiliation of the Son, and we have seen his exaltation, when he *received* the kingdom, when he was crowned with glory and honour; but we do not yet see him in full possession, all things are not *manifestly* put in subjection under him; for this the whole Church, yea, and all creation wait, and it will be yet perfected, when the Saviour returns to his waiting servants, with whom he left the very solemn charge, "Occupy till I come." Thus we learn, from the Apostle's comment on the Psalm, that the Redeemer will yet in his own

person place all things under human nature ; and that the sway which was committed to the *first* man, when he was made in the image of God, and which he so greatly lost by transgression, will be more than restored by the second Adam—the Lord from heaven—who will return in our *glorified* humanity to cast down the powers of darkness and set up the blessed kingdom of perfect light, holiness, and order.

This, then, may suffice for the first part of our subject, on which all the rest depends ; and this, I trust, may prove a satisfactory reply to the important question, — In what sense is Christ absent from his Church, and why it is that his return should have such a momentous aspect in the view of true believers ?

II. What are the more *prominent* duties of his people, during the absence of their beloved Master ? It is important to select the more *prominent*, because we should otherwise range through the whole circle of Christian duties, on all of which the prospect of the Redeemer's coming ought to tell. I would, therefore, only refer to *two*, because these are more immediately connected with the return of the Great Master of the household. I mean, the use of the talents committed to the servants, and the duty of waiting for his return.

As to the first, we may observe that it is all contained in that trite but striking command, "Occupy till I come;" an injunction addressed not so much to the citizens, who clearly set forth the Jewish nation, as it is to the servants of the household, who typify the professed members of Christ's Church. Nor can we understand this charge, and the after sin of the slothful servant, without bearing in mind something of the habits of the times when our Lord spoke; some of which are unknown in the day and country wherein God hath cast our lot. The *servants* of that period were, generally speaking, *slaves*, whose time and service were claimed by their master as part of his property. It was no free service, no covenanted obedience, and it was far from unusual, in the case of noblemen or petty princes, to engage their slaves in some actual trade, the profits of which belonged to the master; a small share being reserved for the active agent.* And this explains to us the wrath of the nobleman, when the slothful servant merely returned the pound, without having made any effort to use the same in trading, "Wherefore, then, gavest thou not my money into the bank,

* See this proved by Greswell, in his admirable "Exposition of the Parables," vol. v. part ii. pp. 41—46.

that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

In the application of these things to the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must not, of course, draw the similitude too close, or we should be involved in some such distressing mistakes as the following:—that the service of believers was of constraint rather than of liberty. But the reference to ancient customs does impress upon us the weight of responsibility laid upon all the professed members of Christ—it does show us that Christ will truly reckon with us, and that he will not be satisfied with *negative* religion. It does not appear necessary to fix on some specific stewardship which amounts to all the weight and responsibility of the ten talents, nor yet to follow out the distinctions which the Lord might intend by the lesser, as distinguished from the greater task. It is enough for us to feel that, whereas all have talents committed to them, some may have a greater responsibility, and some less. Even in the things which make for our everlasting peace, this is true; for though all have the inestimable blessing of Gospel light and privileges, some have greater opportunities both of receiving and of dispensing these unfading riches. And certainly, in earthly responsibilities, the difference is marked

—for to some a large share of influence and gifts and riches is intrusted, whilst others are confined to a very contracted sphere. Still the parable holds out the impressive view, that what makes our possession of the talent so important is, not so much the extent of it as the design of the Great Master in calling us to such a stewardship.

My brethren, the Lord would have us all *occupied* for him; he would strip us of slothfulness by stripping us of selfishness. Everything we have, whether temporal or spiritual, is to be received and used with that all-impressive word ringing in our ears, “Occupy till I come;” and then, and then only, we enter on the high service to which we are called in the very spirit of the Gospel. We are constantly reminded that “we are not our own, but bought with a price; that we are henceforth to live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again.” And that “whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we ought to do all to the glory of God.”

I know, indeed, that men too often take these strong injunctions as mere words of exhortation, which cannot be fully or practically used; but this is because, like the slothful servant, they have no love to the Great Master, but rather

view him in a perverted light—severe and austere—rigorously demanding certain duties, without considering all the motives by which he engages us to his service—the happiness there is in obeying his gentle voice, and the full reward which follows the service of unflinching obedience. And here it is that the prospect of the Redeemer's speedy advent serves as a most important *test*, whilst it affords a most influential *motive*. If we love the Saviour who died for all men, but specially intercedes for the Church of God, we shall feel that no charge of his can be of light moment. We look not so much at the *extent* of the Stewardship as at the fact. We regard the smallest sphere, the most apparently trifling occupation, as clothed with importance, in the view of the Lord's appointment, and in the anticipation of the day of the Lord. We are to meet that gracious Master who committed the affairs of his household to us,—to some a larger talent, and to some a less,—but all of them to be accounted for at his return. A dreadful woe and curse must light upon all who slothfully hide the talent in a napkin, satisfied with the mere effort of appeasing the severity of an austere master. And great and glorious will be the recompense of every faithful servant who occupied the talent, whether more or less,

because it was committed to him by the best of Masters,—because in doing so he was allowed to glorify him, to whose grace he owed every blessing, and because he expected soon to meet his returning Lord in full possession of that “kingdom which cannot be moved.” Take heed, brethren, that you do not sever present duties from the coming of the Lord—if the cross is to endue you with the high motive of love—let the hope of the crown inspire you with fresh vigour in the Lord’s service, and with a deep and constant feeling of your responsibilities. How great, then, will be your devotedness, how enlarged your gifts to God’s treasury; how will time and money and strength be all enlisted in the happy service of the Redeemer, and you will then inquire,—not what I can keep back for self,—but what I can render to the Lord, and consecrate to his service, whose love is so unbounded, and whose charge is never to be forgotten, “Occupy till I come.”

Another duty, which I proposed to dwell on, was that of waiting for the Lord. It is not so clearly stated in our chapter as in the parallel chapters of Matt. xxv., and Mark xiii., both of which dwell on this feature of the true servants of God, in opposition to the unwatchful spirit of the nominal, but careless professors of his word.

It is, however, fully implied here, and quite sufficiently for our present brief comment on this interesting position of the Lord's true children. And here, I apprehend, comes in the practical bearing of the first part of our subject. A stress was laid on the actual person of Christ, because without it all our hopes of salvation must vanish, and because, in the hope of approaching glory, it makes all the difference whether we expect the very same glorious Being, who took up our glorified humanity to the sight of God. We cannot, in this view, forget the *emphasis* of the angelic messengers at the time of our Lord's ascension, who inquired of the apostles, "Ye men of Galilee, Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* A most refreshing word to a tried and afflicted Church; and yet it would seem almost forgotten at certain periods of that Church's history, when vague ideas of improvement in the household, or of amalgamation of the world's interests with those of the Master's servants, seem to have overshadowed the blessed hope of that Master's return.

I cannot help thinking that the root of all this

* Acts i. 11.

evil, this want of a lively, and even a longing hope of Christ's glorious appearance, may be traced to the expectation of millennial blessedness, before the Lord himself shall return in power and great glory. It is, I know, only the infidel and scoffer who will exclaim, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But yet something of this spirit seems from time to time to have tinged the expectations of God's children, since they could dwell on the approaching period of this world's holiness and universal light, without thinking it necessary that the Lord of glory should himself be present. Men have very easily concluded that it signified little whether we looked for the more full, spiritual presence of the Spirit, or the actual, bodily presence of the Lord Christ; and this, in the face of all the apostolic intimations, that the Lord *himself* should descend from heaven, and that it was for the same incarnate Word, once manifest for man's redemption, that all believers were to look with true and realizing hope. We may thank God, with all sincerity, that such views have been greatly dissipated in the fair discussion of the subject. And perhaps at no period of the Church, except in its very primitive existence,

has the hope of the Redeemer's second coming held a more prominent and influential position, than it does at present. Of this we may feel quite assured, that as the day of trial advances, which the Scriptures forewarn us must precede the period of the kingdom, in the same proportion these dreams of gently sliding into millennial happiness will be effectually driven away. The day of tribulation which awaits the Church, compared with which all others are as nothing, shall soon teach men the lesson, that at the close of this dispensation, as well as at the beginning (and perhaps more), believers must pass through much affliction before they enter on their rest and glory. And hence we may feel convinced that our Lord's warnings, and yet, withal, his glorious anticipations, will be more realized as the day of his return draws nigh. The Church will, in fact, feel that one of her most blessed privileges is to *wait* for the Lord from heaven,—to be on the constant look out for the dawning of millennial light,—and thus to welcome the very first ray of the bright and morning star, without which all would be still comparative darkness. In a word, we must remember, that he who said, "Occupy till I come," said also, with repeated emphasis, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

III. It remains now that I very briefly dwell on the TEMPTATIONS to which the servants of Christ are exposed during his absence. I shall only refer to *two* on the present occasion, and leave it to your own inquiry and meditation to dwell on many more wherewith all the people of God must expect to be assaulted in the present state of conflict.

One of these *temptations* is *disunion*, as it is distinctly brought out in a similar chapter,—I mean Matt. xxiv.,—whereas, in ours, it is only implied. The Saviour gives us a faithful picture of the evil servant, by the joy he feels at the Master's delay, and the license which he is thereby enabled to give to his unsubdued passions and temper. "My Lord delayeth his coming," is the language of his heart, and, therefore, "he begins to *smite* his fellow-servants and to eat and drink with the drunken." What can better answer to the parabolical idea of *smiting* than the miserable discord which has so long existed in the visible Church? And whether we look at the actual schisms from the body, by which new Churches, or rather endless sects, have been organized, or at the manifold divisions of heart which have taken place within the precincts of the household, we must decide

that our common Christianity has been grievously injured in the eyes of an ungodly and thoughtless world. How has the infidel taken occasion to renew his scoff at the want of love exhibited among the professed followers of Christ! How has the progress of the heavenly light been retarded by the contradiction which exists between the theory and the practical illustration of the Christian religion! Whilst the Master delayed, the servants have had time to contend, and even to wrangle one with another; and instead of resisting such a temptation by engaging themselves heartily in the Master's work, as well as in looking out for his return, they have fallen too often into the devil's snare, and exhibited strife and contention and every evil work to the astonished, but delighted bystanders. Oh! sad and distressing spectacle, that a family so constituted,—with a bright and perfect example of love before them,—with the solemn and reiterated charge left with them, “Love one another,”—with the prospect of a kingdom where the very elements shall be unruffled harmony,—that such a family should contain the bitter seeds of discord and retain in its bosom the root of bitterness! All this is most sad and humiliating, and tends continually to remind the Christian

of the immense success which God has mysteriously conceded to sin and Satan for the given time.

There is one more temptation on which I might now dwell, in concluding this discourse, if time permitted, but which I have, in some measure, anticipated in speaking of the slothful servant;—I mean that sort of *negative* religion (if such it can be called) which belongs to all whose hearts are not right with God, and yet who preserve the outward form of godliness.

They are satisfied with hiding their talent in a napkin, and with presenting it at last to the Great Master unimproved and unaltered, in the great day of account. A temptation this which often assaults the child of light, whom Satan would persuade to be content with *present* attainments; he is too often forgetful of the high and holy demands of the Lord, of the great purposes for which the talents were committed to his care, and of the abundant fruitfulness to which he might reach by the power of the Spirit of God. The Saviour yet tarries, and we grow weary in watching for him—all around us is a deadening atmosphere, and the holy flame of love sinks down. We catch the evil spirit of the world which surrounds us; and behold, our zeal and activity begin to slacken. Now if this

be the case with God's own children in this long protracted conflict, what shall we say of the mere *nominal* professor? Truly, he is shadowed forth by this slothful servant, his religion is all negative—no looking to a Saviour's cross for life—no hungering and thirsting for salvation—no longing for conformity to Christ's most holy image—no aiming at doing all things to the glory of God. Self is his idol, and earthly care and quietness his portion, and therefore the talent is concealed in safety, but not put forth to real use. Is it any wonder that the Great Master should at last pass the sentence, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." And that the command should be added, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds." Oh! if the Lord should now send forth his Archangel to proclaim his coming—if the heavens should rend asunder, and the King of kings appear—what should be the condition of thousands and ten thousands of professed servants of Christ, who wear his livery, but love not his service? We may well tremble at the thought; and in the contemplation of that overwhelming sentence, we may well dread anything like deception, or mere outside religion. Let us then make Christ our sure and only refuge—glory only in his imputed

righteousness, and be filled with his renovating and sanctifying Spirit, and then we shall look forward to the Epiphany of the adorable Saviour, with a joy and a hope which nothing earthly can inspire.

“Behold, I come quickly,” is the Master’s own announcement—he left it with us as a parting word of comfort. His voice seems yet to echo on the very walls of his house, and the servants may well stand ready to receive him, when his friendly accents once more shall reach their ear. Perhaps at this moment the very horses are being yoked to his chariot, and the angelic hosts may be waiting for the return of the glorious Messiah to wind up all the high purposes of his redeeming work. This we do know—whenever that hour shall arrive, whose appointment was from eternity; when the groans of creation shall cease, and the Lord of the whole earth shall say, “Behold, I make all things new,”—then, I say, the true and faithful servants shall lift up their heads with joy—welcome the arrival of their well-beloved Master—put on their beautiful garments, and sit down for ever at the marriage supper of the Lamb. God in mercy grant that the preacher and the people may have their lot amongst the glorified saints of the kingdom!

LECTURE V.

THE TRANSFER OF BLESSINGS FROM THE JEWS.

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MATTHEW XXI. 43.

“ Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth (ποιουντι) the fruits thereof.”

WHEN the words of the text were uttered they were strictly prophetic. They have now, in the lapse of years, become a matter of history, and the part allotted to me in this Course of Lectures is to direct your consideration to an event not less distinctly foretold by the voice of prophecy than fulfilled by the hand of Providence.

The text announces the taking away of the

kingdom of God from Israel and the transfer of it to another nation; or, in other words, the authoritative and penal removal of the highest conceivable religious privileges from one people and the gracious communication of them to another. The text implies, that the transaction arises out of an equitable understanding between the parties. The blessing had been granted conditionally; the terms of the agreement were not fulfilled; and the blessing was to be taken away and given to another nation upon similar conditions.

Such is the relation in which the Gentile Church stands to the Jewish.

The kingdom of God is taken from the Jews and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The causes and conditions and extent of this arrangement are the questions which we have to examine; the fact itself is indisputable; and it will be necessary to enter into an accurate investigation of these particulars in order to ascertain the real nature of the change which has taken place as regards the visible seat of the Divine government.

That such an inquiry is needful may be evidenced by a brief reference to two classes of

opinions which are very generally held upon this subject.

The first is the opinion of those who hold that there is no immediate analogy between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* dispensations, and, therefore, that there has not been a direct transfer of blessing from the one to the other. They say, that the Jewish system was typical, dark, and imperfect; that the spiritual graces of the Holy Ghost were not yet vouchsafed; that the ordinances were wholly carnal, the knowledge of Christ and of the resurrection and of the immortality of the soul very indistinct; in short, that all was the haze of twilight until the day dawned in the Christian dispensation. To such the words of the text would convey the idea of development rather than of transfer.

Others, again, acknowledge the special mercy given, and continued for a long period, to the nation of Israel, to have been of a highly spiritual character; and regard it, in this respect, as identical with the Christian, excepting only that part of it which was purely external, temporal, and confined to the nation as such, but that now the time has arrived when all national distinction is abolished, the external ceremonies and national peculiarities are superseded, there is

no longer any difference,—no more Jew and Greek, circumcision and uncircumcision,—barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all. It is obvious that this second view involves the idea of amalgamation and not of transfer. If the former of these opinions be correct, the blessings enjoyed by Israel must have been in a spiritual sense infinitely less than those which are manifested in the Christian Church, and the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Gal. iii. 14—18) perfectly distinct from the covenant under which we live. If the latter, the position of the Jewish nation, as regards its spiritual mercy, is as favourable as ever; the only loss it has sustained is of a temporal nature. The Gospel is preached by Gentiles instead of Jews, the kingdom of God is as the mysterious dew among the nations of the earth, instead of being enclosed as a fountain-head in the nation and land of Israel. What was once visible is now unseen, what was once definite is now like a desert track swept by the whirlwind.

But if the language of our blessed Lord in the text be taken in its plain and obvious connexion, then was the same blessing, called by Him “the kingdom of God,” to be taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. And this

involves a transfer of the "kingdom of God" from Jew to Gentile, so long as the latter shall fulfil the terms upon which the transfer is made.

If, therefore, we find, in the course of ages and generations, that the present possessors value and use their mercy in a more humble spirit and with more diligence than their predecessors, this does not alter the nature of the blessing or the relation in which the several parties stand towards God.

In order to illustrate this point, it will be necessary to refer to the parable to which the text belongs, and of which, in fact, it forms the moral and interpretation.

The parable of the wicked husbandmen (ver. 33—41) was addressed to the chief priests and elders who questioned our Lord's authority: "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" (Ver. 23.)

The point at issue between them was the right of Jesus Christ to teach and to govern in Israel. The Jews claimed independence of any temporal authority but that of Cæsar, and of all spiritual headship but that vested in the chief priests and rabbies. Our Lord, by an appeal to facts concealed under the well-known figures of the parable, asserts His own supremacy in both, and compels them to admit the righteousness

of that punishment which was about to be inflicted upon them. (Luke xx. 16.)

It shall be my endeavour to handle those particulars of the parable which will serve to establish the statement contained in the words of our text: and may He whose office it is to guide into *all* truth, sanctify the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts, for Christ's sake!

I. The kingdom of God is likened unto a vineyard, and the points of resemblance are enumerated in detail.

“A certain householder planted a vineyard, hedged it round about, digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower.”

The important features here are, that having lands lying waste, or ill cultivated, the owner selected a certain portion for the production of that which would yield the best return to himself and his husbandmen. This chosen spot was duly prepared, the stones were picked out, the land broken up, the vines planted, and a fence built around to mark its limits and defend it from trespass. A wine-press was constructed in anticipation of the vintage, and a tower placed in the midst for the oversight and custody of the property. Neither pains nor expense were spared to render the vineyard safe and fruitful.

And what is the kingdom of God among the children of men but a choice garden in a very fruitful hill? around which is a wall of fire, to protect and separate it from the waste howling wilderness of nature. Here is the tree of life,—the living vine, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Here trees of righteousness, which the Lord Himself hath planted, flourish. The authority, wisdom, liberality, and glory of the great possessor of the vineyard are manifested. It is the depository and dispensary of grace. The kingdom of God on earth is but another name for Eden, where God meets man and holds communion with him. It is but another aspect of that happy relation in which a redeemed sinner stands to God in having a way and place of access by mediation and righteousness. Within this favoured inclosure, privileges in rich abundance, means of grace, promises of triumph, hopes of glory, are provided. And if there be distinction between the householder's vineyard and the barren wilderness, then is there a similar contrast between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the natural man.

But we are not left to an abstract view of the vineyard. The kingdom of God is the revelation of His attributes among men, and is marked

out by fixed and visible limits. Within these provision is made, and means supplied, for present holiness and future glory. When the Lord looks upon His Church on earth He regards it as a vineyard of red wine, and promises, concerning it, "I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will keep it night and day."

Is the visible Church,—the divinely appointed ministry and sacraments,—the forms of worship,—the means of grace, and lively oracles,—as the fence and appurtenances, the wine-press and watch-tower of the vineyard, then is the congregation of faithful men the executive and administration of the kingdom, and whether patriarch, prophet, priest, or apostle bear testimony for God, he preaches the Gospel of the kingdom, and carries with him the high credentials of the King of kings. (Luke x. 11.) Is the vineyard planted? The *good seed* are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one. To some it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. "For except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. And except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Do the vines flourish, and the tender grapes give a good

smell? Then are the renewed hearts of sinners the willing subjects of His grace. The kingdom of God is within them; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." (Ps. xcii. 13.)

Is the fruit of the vineyard a type of the influence of the kingdom? Then are its blessed effects like ointment poured forth. That wine which maketh glad the heart of man is carried into distant lands, and thirsty souls are refreshed and comforted thereby. Many rejoice because of the vineyard who only know it by its fruits. It is the Gospel of the kingdom which proclaims the year of release, sets the captive free, opens the prison-gate, and leads captivity captive.

This is balm to the weary soul, and strength to the weak. It is the communication of this mercy which glorifies Him who hath commanded us to give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to them that be of a heavy heart. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. Let us notice,

II. The terms upon which the husbandmen were put in possession of it.

"He let it out to husbandmen."

The vineyard being prepared, the owner sought

out husbandmen, to whom he might entrust its care and cultivation; and this corresponds with the plan of the dispensations of God with regard to His Church. For in nothing is the condescension of God more conspicuous, than in the employment of men to be His agents and fellow-workers in His kingdom here on earth. Having in His everlasting purpose planned and set the bounds of His Church, (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9,) He sought out the husbandmen who should dress His garden, and render the fruits thereof in due season. Thus He called Abraham at the first, and made promise to him, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect." "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This promise was tendered and accepted by the father of the faithful, and was renewed in his sons, Isaac and Jacob; but the grant was not formally ratified until God assembled the husbandmen in the wilderness, and before He gave them actual possession proclaimed the conditions of the covenant, and the solemn ratification of it.

And while we gaze upon the wonders of Sinai, and hear the voice of words exceeding great, and follow the mediator as he goes into the

presence of the majesty of God, let us realize the formal grant of the kingdom to Israel as a nation.

And first, on the part of Jehovah the preamble of the covenant announces the sovereignty of grace. He saith to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Next, by right of absolute supremacy, follows the claim for exclusive homage.

"Thou shalt have none other gods but me. Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God."

To this is added the privilege of preference and dignity.

"Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

And, lastly, the medium of access and adoration is prescribed.

"Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make with you gods of gold. An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy

peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen. In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee." (Exod. xx. 23, 24.)

Then with solemn oath did God deliver the words which He had written, and subscribed with His own hand, and the Mediator "took the book of the covenant and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. And when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you." Here was sure evidence of propitiation. All was sprinkled with blood. The blood of lives. The well known symbol of atonement. The stain of it was upon everything—upon the altar, upon the book, upon all its pages, precepts, assurances, promises, threatenings.

Heaven and earth are witnesses. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken will we do."

Such were the terms upon which Israel received the privileges of the kingdom of God. With promise of mercy and grace the conditions of obedience are ratified.

“ This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them, with all thine heart, and all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments, and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise and in name and in honour, that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken.”

From this period we see the kingdom of God visibly in Israel. The presence of God was with them. The Lord was their King. And from the time of the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness to the building of the temple upon Mount Moriah, the authority and prerogative of God were plainly asserted.

And here we may pause, to admire the privileges of the husbandmen. They were now admitted into a different relation to that in which they stood before. They were now not servants, or hirelings, but tenants under a sealed covenant; and not only so, but chosen tenants—

they were a chosen nation, and a peculiar people.

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers.”

They were the objects of sovereign grace and election, and their privileges were commensurate with their calling. They were a blessed people, under a covenant of pardon. “Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord His God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them.” They were distinguished from all other nations by the righteousness of their law, and their high moral responsibility. “For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there

so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" (See Exod. xv. 17.)

They had the Gospel preached unto them in all their ordinances and sacrifices, they had the Paschal Lamb, and the morning and evening lamb; the High Priest, and the altar of incense; the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat; the cloud of glory, the Shekinah, the Urim and Thummim. The word of faith was as nigh to them as it is to us. (Deut. xxx. 14; Rom. x. 6—8.) It was not hidden from them, neither was it far off, "but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

"They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea—they did eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

What advantage, then, had the tenants of the vineyard? Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

"To them pertained the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law, and

the service of God and the promises, whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever!"

"He let it out to husbandmen!" The kingdom of God was given to the Jews.

III. Let us consider next, the rent demanded and refused.

"When the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first, and they did unto them likewise."

From the death of Joshua until Samuel (Acts xiii. 20) the prophet, Israel possessed the vineyard without any special message or direct call from God, besides that which was providential. We read in the book of Judges, of a prophet and a prophetess; but there is a marked distinction between them and the order of prophets which succeeded Samuel. (See 1 Sam. iii. 1; ix. 9; and Judges vi. 8.) If they sinned, an enemy was sent against them; if they sorrowed and repented, a judge was raised up to deliver them: and thus the goodness, grace, and patience of God was manifested. But as the time of pro-

bation passed away, and the time for fruit drew near, God sent them a prophet, to teach and testify against them. And there is this peculiarity in the first message by His servant Samuel, that it arrived just at the time when the nation had determined to have a king of their own. And Samuel warned them; “nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us.” (1 Sam. viii. 19.) And Samuel died; and Gad, and Nathan, and Abijah the Shilonite came and demanded the rent of the vineyard. And Iddo, and Shemaiah, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Hanani the seer. And the husbandmen were incensed against them (2 Chron. xvi. 10), and they began to beat them, and persecute and slay them; so that when Elijah and Elisha were sent, many had fallen victims to the fury of Jezebel and Ahab: and the list of martyred prophets increases rapidly from that period. Time would fail to enumerate the sufferings of such as Zechariah and Micaiah, and Urijah, who was fetched forth from Egypt and slain with the sword, and his dead body cast into the graves of the common people. And what was Jeremiah’s ministry but a series of persecutions, and Isaiah’s end but a cruel tragedy, with scarce a parallel in the history of savage

torture? So that from Samuel to Malachi, we may ask, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?"

"The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.)

But the patience of the owner was not exhausted. Still He appealed to the rebellious tenants:—

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy King: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king?" (Hosea xiii. 9, 10.)

And here let it be observed, that the enmity manifested was not against the servants themselves, for we do not read that they demeaned themselves in an overbearing and unseemly manner towards the husbandmen; but the enmity was against their message. The sin of the husbandmen was robbery and rebellion, and this brought forth death. The servants evinced throughout an example of patience and courage; they persevered, in obedience to their Master's

will, to demand His right; and they only ceased to assert this when death brought their sufferings to a close.

IV. The right of the owner resisted, and the tenants are rejected.

“ But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”

We have traced hitherto the manner in which the tenants refused to render the fruit of the vineyard to their landlord: it only remains for us to see how, upon their direct resistance of his right, asserted in the person of his son, they were ejected, and the vineyard given to others.

We must observe then, first, the exceeding patience and condescension of the owner, who, having one only and beloved son, determined to send him to them. Notwithstanding the indignity and cruelty inflicted upon the former messengers; notwithstanding the danger to which his well-beloved son might be exposed, yet his unquestionable right to the property, his for-

bearance with their contempt of his messages, and the personal presence of his only son, the heir and representative of himself might be expected to have some weight with them, "They will reverence my son." Thus, last of all, Jesus Christ came to the Jews; a prophet, yea, greater than a prophet,—the prophesied King! In the last days He spake unto them by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things; by whom also He made the world, who was the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, He came with all authority and meekness. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not." He asserted His claim, as the Son of God, and they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" He asserted His kingdom; they said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He proved His Divine power, and they said, "If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." (John xi. 47, 48,)

He warned them of approaching judgment, and they took Him and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew him, saying, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

And now, what further proof can we have of the entire breach of the covenant by which they got possession of the vineyard? Where was the

kingdom of God when they had cast out and crucified their King? What was the state of the Jewish Church when the chief priests and elders had cast away the key of knowledge, and shut up the kingdom of heaven against the nation? How more completely could they negative the spirit of Moses and the prophets, than when "they denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted to them, and killed the Prince of Life?" This was the climax of their sin. They denied Him in His death; they denied Him in His resurrection. They counted themselves unworthy of eternal life; and the kingdom of God was transferred to the Gentiles. And here I look not so much at the national judgments of Israel, as at the moral and judicial blindness which has happened in part unto them. O, how light a matter is it that they should be exiles from their country, and without political or national privilege, in comparison of their being without a Saviour! that as a nation they should be like a tarnished casket which has lost its jewel, or a pallid corpse without breath! What more awful consideration can be presented to the mind, than the state of that nation, once in possession of the kingdom of God, now in a state of spiritual darkness and repudiation?

But it is time to ask what are the terms upon which the vineyard has been given over to others.

Has the Lord departed from His first principle, or changed the rule of His own conduct? Has He chosen Israel at the first out of sovereign grace? and has He given His vineyard to Gentiles for their works and deservings? How, then, shall the Scripture be fulfilled, which says, (Isaiah lxxv. 1, 2,) "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not for me?"

How, then, shall His purpose be accomplished, "in making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, even those whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" As He saith also in Hosea, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."

The transfer, then, was of grace: and wherein does the parallel between the two dispensations lie, otherwise than in the fact, that the visible Church for the time being, is the depository and dispensary of Divine truth? The lively oracles and the covenant is in our keeping now, to the exclusion of Israel as a nation; just as, in former times, the same privileges were exclusively given to the Jews.

If Divine sovereignty and dominion and worship and atonement and obedience formed the terms of the Abrahamic and Mosaic and Davidic covenants, do they not form the very essence of the covenant of the Gentile dispensation? Hear the Apostle Peter's address, as from Mount Zion, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is become the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even unto them which stumble at the word being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Certain it is the Jews have been nationally

ejected from the vineyard, and in what respects do our present privileges differ from theirs?

What more has the Gentile Church than Israel of old? Have we better promises than those which were made yea, and amen, in Jesus Christ, and which were theirs for a time before the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles? Have we oracles, or adoption, or glory, or the service of God, or covenants, which were not in the Jewish Church previous to her final dismemberment? No, in no wise. We have the same word of promise—the same God of grace—the same hope of glory—the same wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And if distinction there be, it arises only out of the period of time in which our dispensation is cast, and not in the principle of the mercies we enjoy. We look back where the Jew looked forward—we have history where the Jew had prophecy—we have the evening, where the Jew had the morning of the vineyard. But the kingdom of God is the same. The blood of atonement, under the Jewish and under the Christian dispensations, has respect to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. In these is salvation, in no other. If Jesus Christ is after Moses, He was before Abraham. The covenant of Sinai is not broken, but fulfilled on Calvary. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in

Jesus, and in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Wherein stands the difference? Whether David says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," or some poor broken-hearted penitent, sinking under the burden of an accusing conscience, cries out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me."

And now, what are the conclusions we draw from this statement?

First. It is evident that there is a parallel between the dispensation of the kingdom to the Gentiles, and the dispensation to the Jews. The lease of the vineyard is conditional; the tenure temporary. If in the one case the apostacy of Israel was anticipated, so in the other is the apostacy of the Gentiles. If the enjoyment of the covenant was secured so long as the Jews acknowledged the right of their Lord and King over them, so in like manner the Gentiles possess the vineyard, so long as they hold the head, and bring forth the fruits thereof. (Rom. xi. 20—22.)

If, again, from the very beginning, it was foretold that the time would arrive when Israel would cease to obey her God, and lose her privileges, so in the same Word of inspiration, it is declared that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be

come in. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. There is, then, a period for the termination of the lease, as much for the Gentiles as for Israel. The apostasy of the latter day is as much the filling up of the cup of national iniquity in Christendom, as the final rejection of Christ by the Jews. The confederacy of Antichrist is the signal for the return of Israel's King. And the circumstances which, as a matter of history, accompanied the one, seem to find their counterpart in what is even now occurring in the world. The Jewish Church received its full measure of revelation, from Abraham to Moses, from David to our Lord himself, yea, even unto the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon 3,000 believing Israelites. The Jewish Church exclusively possessed the lease of the vineyard; and her ejection did not take place until a sufficient number of Gentiles had been converted, and disciplined in the doctrines and ordinances of the Christian faith, to stand independently of Jewish teachers; then the wall of partition was levelled to the ground. And may we not trace a similar preparation going on at present? If the apostasy be gathering its forces, and marshalling its legions for the day of battle; if the light in the candlestick begins to

burn dimly, and the keepers of the sanctuary fail to trim the lamps with fresh oil, and all things betoken a speedy removal of our privileges, then we may see a rapid and wonderful gathering out of a little remnant from Israel, who will take their station amid the old bulwarks of Zion, and defend her battlements, like some favoured detachment which has survived a general overthrow. Their trials and afflictions will have prepared them for the crisis, and the victory will be theirs. "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God; as the angel of the Lord before them."

But, secondly.

If we inquire the object for which this transfer has been made, the reply is obvious. God hath done it to humble Israel. The pride of Ephraim testifies against him. He said, "I am, and there is no other." He thought, that being selected as the one nation of God's choice, he was essential and necessary to the purposes of the Most High. But God, in casting him off, has left a solemn lesson on record for us all. He has said to Israel, "I can do without you. I have other instruments at my command quite as effective, quite as suitable as you. There is

no superiority of talent, strength, numbers, or qualification in your nation, which others may not have; and therefore you have to bear the shame and reproach of being put aside, and having others preferred to you." Who does not herein recognise the hand of sovereignty? God is the Judge. He putteth down one, and setteth up another. Oh, let us go down to the potter's house, and see the work which he fashions on the wheels. The vessel that he made of clay is marred in the hand of the potter, so he makes it again another vessel as it seems good to the potter to make it. "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?" saith the Lord. "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you."

But, thirdly, the overflowing love of God was gloriously displayed in this transfer of the blessing. He had purposes of grace to others besides Israel, and His love could not be confined within the narrow compass of a single nation. He beheld from all eternity millions among the children of men whose souls were precious in His sight; and He said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up

the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.) For this cause the kingdom of God was preached unto the Gentiles; and they who were counted as aliens and outcasts, and set with the dogs of the flock, were made nigh by the blood of Christ, fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Through the fall of the Jews salvation is come unto the Gentiles; and we may admire the riches of Divine grace in providing a ransom for us, even for us sinners of the Gentiles. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Lastly, This transfer of the kingdom of God was preparatory to the establishment of His kingdom of glory for ever in Israel and in the world at large.

The last question put by the disciples to our Lord was this: "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The enlightened minds of the disciples recognised the true state of the case. The kingdom had been taken away, and they looked for its restoration.

Our Lord does not reprove them for asking the question, nor does his answer involve the slightest shadow of evidence that the kingdom would not again be restored to Israel. On the contrary, the reply plainly intimates that the times and seasons were fixed in the purpose of God, and that, in the interim, they were to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. If, then, we have New Testament warrant for expecting the restoration of the kingdom of God to Israel, what other interpretation can we put upon such passages as Micah iv. 7, "I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." And Jer. iii. 17, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord." What other expectation can the Church of Christ scripturally entertain, but that the glory of the world is connected with the restored glory of Israel? Oh, what narrow views do we take of redemption! what scanty hopes of the glory that shall be! Blessed and happy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; but who shall tell the

blessedness of those who shall see the whole world baptized with the blessings of a Jubilee, and our precious Immanuel reigning over a glorified Church of Jew and Gentile, and the whole universe covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea!

LECTURE VI.

THE TRUE STANDING OF THE GENTILE CHURCH.

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ROMANS XI. 17—21.

“ And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree ; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear : For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”

WHEN drawing to a close the great theme of this and the two preceding chapters—the defection of the Jewish, and the calling of the Gentile Church, the apostle, as if overpowered by the revelation made to him, and aware of the inadequacy of his conceptions, breaks forth into the exclamation, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” And if he, the graciously selected and accredited herald of the expansiveness of the “better covenant,” while standing so near to the fount of heavenly wisdom, and honoured with such an “abundance of revelations,”* thus expressed amazement at the things which he uttered, how does it become us, with profoundest reverence and distrustfulness of self, to approach the consideration of a subject so weighty, in both its positive and relative importance, and so pregnant with eternal interests, as “*the true standing of the Gentile Church*,” which, in the order of selected topics, now awaits our attention. Happily, for our encouragement it is written, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”† On this direction and promise, then, let us humbly

* 2 Cor. xii. 1—7.

† James i. 5.

and prayerfully rely, while seeking, as dear children, the instruction of our Father, upon that which concerns us so nearly.

The Jewish Church is set forth to us in the text, under the figure of an olive tree; while the Gentile Church is exhibited as being grafted on the same stem, but cut out of a wild olive tree; for which room has been made by the breaking off of some of the original, natural branches. The figure is a plain and simple one, and needs no illustration or explanation. And we only for the present remark, that as the process of grafting effects a positive junction or union, so as that the engrafted branches live, not by the power of their own vitality, but by the vital energy and vegetative force of the stock into which they have been introduced, so the Gentile and Jewish Church do, in the purpose and intention of God, subsist in a state of positive union; the Gentile being cut out of a barren and wild stock, and enabled to partake of the root and fatness of the true olive tree, as the effect of such union. And though visibly, there is everything that would indicate disjunction and positive separation, between the Gentile and the Jew; yet the final development of the purpose of God towards both, will eventually show the union to be real and complete. And certain it is, that

that which subsists in Divine intention, however it may seem to be suspended as to its manifestation for a time, is yet to be received and dealt with as a matter of fact.

This remark prepares the way for another, which it is important for us to bear in mind, namely, that the basis upon which both the Jewish and Gentile Church stand, in the purpose of God, is one and the same. It is called in Holy Scripture, the "*new covenant*," and the "*better covenant*," and is said to have been "*established on better promises.*"* These expressions imply contrast with some other covenant. And our idea of that other covenant may be gathered from the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, incorporating that of the Prophet Jeremiah,† "*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I re-*

* Heb. viii. 6.

† Comp. Jer. xxxi. 31—34; and Heb. viii.

garded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The contrast, then, lies between the covenant of grace, of which Christ is the Mediator, and the national covenant, made with Israel on Mount Sinai, the mediator of which was Moses; the ministry whereof, until it "waxed old," was in the hands of Aaron and his sons.

There is no doubt that the primary relation of the new covenant here announced, and put in contrast with the old, or Sinai covenant, was to the literal Israel, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh; and in whom, as a nation, it is eventually to have an exact fulfilment. But, in truth, it has a still wider and far more extensive relation. And this will be apparent, when we bear in mind that it is virtually the expansion of the first covenant made with Abraham, the blessings of which were, in the purpose

of God's mercy, to be extended equally, and without restriction, to the Gentile races of the earth. And the thing that now strikes us as necessary to be mentioned, is that which has occurred in reference to the administration of the better covenant, first to the Jews, next to the Gentiles. In point of fact, both these administrations were but various phases (so to speak) of the same thing. In the first administration, it was limited, in the second, expanded; or, in other words, it was first partial, then universal: not, indeed, as if God had just resolved on the universal administration when the limited or partial one had failed; but they both followed, in due sequence, the primary announcement, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head,* which contained in it the elements of the new or better covenant; and which was further disclosed, with features more distinctly portrayed, in the reiterated promises made to Abraham, of which we have specimens when we read that "God brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be:"† and when he declared, "As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. xv. 6.

nations:"* and again, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."†

There can be no doubt that the covenant here referred to, was virtually the new or better covenant (called in Isaiah‡ the covenant of *peace*)—though set forth in the then mysterious and comprehensive brevity of prophetic announcement; for when, in the light of further and fuller revelations, we trace out its development, its identity with that of which Jesus was the Mediator and Administrator becomes strikingly apparent. In support of this, we need only refer to the statements of the apostle in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians—the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the third of the Epistle to the Galatians; from the first of which we learn that Christ, "who is our peace," when he came forth to the administration of the better covenant, broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; made in himself of twain, one new man; preached peace—that is, developed the covenant to the Gentiles, who were afar off, and to the Jews who were nigh, so as to confer on both an equal liberty of access by one Spirit unto the Father; so as that the Gentiles might be no more strangers and foreigners, but fel-

* Gen. xvii. 4.

† Gen. xxii. 18.

‡ Isaiah liv. 10.

low-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and that they might be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, might grow unto an holy temple in the Lord.”* From the second passage referred to, we learn that Abraham was justified, and so brought into the new covenant, not by works, but by faith; not when in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; and that he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe (whether Jew or Gentile) though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also; or, in other words, that all might be justified in the same manner, by the like means, and under one and the same covenant: and that he might be the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith which he had when in uncircumcision; and the apostle, after distinctly affirming that the promise made to Abraham that he should be the heir of the world, was not to him or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, (that is, by

* Eph. ii. 11—22.

virtue of the better covenant, or covenant of grace,) declares that it was to the end that the promise (or rather the *substance* of the promise or covenant) might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, (referring to the original terms of the better covenant,) “I have made thee a father of many nations.”* By the third passage above referred to, we are taught that Abraham was justified by faith under the better covenant; and that all who partake of the like justification, are brought into the same relation to God as Abraham himself, being his children, whether Jew or Gentile. And the apostle adds, that “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel (that is, the “better covenant,)” unto Abraham, saying, “In thee shall all nations be blessed:” so that they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Then, referring to the administration of the better covenant by the personal mediation of Christ, he declares it was in order “that the blessing of Abraham (that is, his covenant relation to God) might also be extended, and made accessible to the Gentile races of the earth; and then, after

* Rom. iv.

arguing out the stability of the better covenant, and showing that it was in no wise interfered with by the intermediate introduction of the law, or Sinai covenant, concludes by affirming that “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;” and, therefore, under the better covenant, (however the positive nationality of the Jews may be perpetuated—as it will be,) “there is neither Jew nor Greek,” as such; “there is neither bond nor free,” as such; “there is neither male nor female,” as such; “for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, (whether Jews by birth, or Gentiles by birth,) and heirs according to the promise”—the original covenant with Abraham, as administered through the mediation of Christ;*—and so denominated the better covenant. It is then a scriptural thing to affirm that, in the purpose of God, the Gentile and Jewish Church have a common basis—even the better covenant—the Gospel dispensation, of which the germ and first elements were contained in the Abrahamic covenant, made 430 years before the national covenant, which is yet also to have its fulfilment in reference to Israel as a peculiar people; but in which the Gentile Church can claim no interest. In this national

* Gal. iii. 6—29.

covenant, all Israel, we apprehend, are still standing; though, in respect to the better covenant, its blessings are at present enjoyed only by "the remnant, according to the election of grace."*

The common basis of the Jewish and Gentile Church being thus ascertained, the inquiry immediately arises, by what means, according to the revealed intention of God, has the Gentile Church been elevated to that noble position in the new covenant of grace, which was first tendered, with all its distinguished blessings, privileges, and immunities, to that peculiar people to whom pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came?"† That the better covenant had a primary relation to the natural seed of Abraham is plain; but then, as we have already seen, it was so comprehensive in its nature, and so beneficent in its intention, as to become available according to the "riches of God's glory, to every vessel of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory; even those whom he had called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; as he said in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my

* Rom. xi. 5.

† Rom. ix. 4, 5.

people; and her beloved which was not beloved."* And if, indeed, (as the fact is,) it has become available to, and is actually enjoyed by, the Gentile Church, then we cannot but see that the Gentiles have been *preferred*; that the Jews, as a people, are in a state of temporary, though not final rejection; and that the Gentile Church is actually the occupant of that position which, but for the fatal cause of Israel's rejection, would be fully enjoyed by that ancient and distinguished people.

It is no part of our province, while dealing with this mysterious subject, to attempt the assigning of any ground upon which we may contemplate, in the way of cause and effect, the rejection of Israel, and the calling of the Gentile Church: it is enough for us to find it plainly revealed, that in the purpose of God, the one grew, in the way of direct sequence, out of the other; not, indeed, as if the breadth of the new covenant were insufficient to admit of both; but rather as if to display the sovereignty of God in the administration of the covenant, both to Jew and to Gentile; and in order, as we shall hereafter see, that the calling of the Gentiles, consequent upon the defection of Israel, might have

* Rom. ix. 23—25.

a powerful bearing upon the final prospects of the latter.

The true standing of the Gentile Church on the sure foundation of the better covenant, will now, we think, be plainly seen, by a brief consideration of the preparatory procedure, the positive act of introduction, and the prospective purpose connected with it.

In regard to the better covenant, two things are to be remarked;—First, that both the covenant itself, and all the fulness which it contained, were entirely of grace, and, therefore, to be embraced and entered on simply by faith, whether by Gentile or by Jew. The procedure preparatory to the calling of the Gentile Church was a free and unequivocal tender of the better covenant and its blessings to the Jews, as the provision of Almighty grace, for the acceptance of their faith. For such acceptance due and adequate provision had been made; that is to say, such amplifications of the first terms of the covenant; such a prophetic portraiture of the Mighty One who should stand forth as the Mediator and Administrator of it; such an adumbration of its purport and efficacy in the Mosaic system; such clear indications of the expanding and progressively developing purposes of God for the bruising of the serpent's head by the myste-

rious seed of the woman,—as that when the fulness of the time should come, when God should send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sins,* there might be, so to speak, such an open vision of the objects of the faith then to be called into action, as should leave no room for doubt, no ground for hesitation as to the acceptance of them. And certain it is, that had Israel as a people, notwithstanding all their past rebellion and obstinacy, and notwithstanding all the tremendous judgments which the hand of Jehovah was accumulating around them, been prepared at the moment to hear, and understand the full purport of those heavenly utterances which heralded the Saviour's birth, proclaiming "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" had they beheld in the cradle of Bethlehem the royal seed of David in the incarnation of the Eternal Word—the angel of the covenant who spake with the Patriarch Abraham on their behalf, and who went before their fathers in the pillar of the cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night through the great and terrible wilderness; had the faith of their national heart embraced with

* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

deep affiance the mystery of godliness,—God manifest in the flesh as it shone out before them,—and traced in the dawning day of redemption the element of that broad effulgence of grace, mercy, and love, which shall eventually overspread the earth and fill heaven with jubilation,—then the full blessings of the better covenant had been theirs: and however God might have seen good to deal out chastisements upon them as froward children, yet beloved for their fathers' sakes, still, being justified by faith, they would have had peace with God, and every infliction of the rod would have been the proof of that tender paternity which scourgeth every child whom it receiveth. But what was the fact?—Why this: “Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, attained not to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” And the secret of the whole matter lay in this, as the apostle affirms, “They stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed?”*

Ah, my brethren, nothing but a struggling consciousness of the power of unbelief in the

* Rom. ix. 31—33.

natural heart of man,—in our own individual hearts,—of unbelief standing out against the plainest revelations, and holding off from the tenderest announcements of love and the richest assurances of promise flowing forth from the very heart of God,—can enable us to enter into the wonder of Israel's unbelief in the midst of so much light, and surrounded by the manifestations of so much love! They stumbled at that stumbling-stone,—at that rock of offence! And this (though the fact does not diminish the guilt, or remove the consequence of Israel's unbelief) was another part of God's preparatory procedure for making clear to the Gentile Church that true standing on the better covenant which is now claiming our attention; for the apostle teaches, in the chapter from which our text is selected, that while Israel nationally obtained not the righteousness which they needed and sought, yet the election,—the remnant,—obtained it, *and the rest were blinded*. Blinded?—and by *whom*? Oh, mystery! oh, the depths of the method of Divine grace! But thus it is, as the apostle goes on to declare, quoting the prophets Isaiah and David,—“According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. And David saith, Let their table be

made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.”* And then, in order to give a still more expanded view of the marvellous procedure in its reference to the prospects of the Gentile Church, involving, as they do also, those of the Jewish, the apostle adds, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*”†

It is then a temporary blindness,—a mysterious preparatory act of God’s sovereignty,—that through their fall, salvation—that is, free justification by faith, under the better covenant,—should come unto the Gentiles; or, as the apostle intimates, that their fall might redound to the enrichment of the world; and that the diminishing of them, that is, their decay or (temporary) loss (τὸ ἥττημα αὐτῶν), might result in becoming the riches of the Gentiles. And thus it is (as expressed in the figurative language of our text), that some of the branches of the true olive tree were broken off, or rather, we should say, the many, the majority; and the sole cause assigned

* Rom. xi. 7—10.

† Rom. xi. 25.

is, not on account of any personal or national peculiarity, but “because of *unbelief* they were broken off,” and cast out from the enjoyment of those privileges and immunities which, as God’s peculiar people, were set before them and tendered as their birthright, by virtue of the first promise made to Abraham. And at this moment, every Jew on whose heart the veil is remaining,* is a living instance of the “severity”† of God towards them which fell, as a dispensation preparatory to that “goodness” bestowed on the wild olive branches grafted in.

I have been content to state the facts of this marvellous procedure with the utmost simplicity, avoiding all speculative discussion: and I desire now, in like manner, to draw attention to the positive act of introduction, whereby the spiritually living members of the Gentile Church, as branches of a wild olive tree, are made partakers of the root and fatness of the olive; or, in other words (dropping the figure), whereby they have been made to occupy for a time their almost exclusive, and altogether prominent, position in the privileges and immunities of the better covenant, as the spiritual seed of Abraham.

Though, during the whole course of our Lord’s

* 2 Cor. iii. 15.

† Rom. xi. 22.

ministry, the blessings of that covenant were tendered exclusively to the acceptance of the Jews; though he made no secret of the fact that he was "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;"* though, by precept and by parable, he exhibited to them the privilege consequent on acceptance, and the forfeiture to be entailed on rejection; though he declared, in winding up the parable of the wicked husbandman, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;"† yet the national heart braced itself up to the full consummation of its fatal unbelief: and no sooner had the catastrophe of the cross closed the then present dispensation of mercy to them, than the resurrection, the crowning act of redemption, prepared for the expansion that should embrace within the terms of the better covenant the Gentile races of the earth. Thenceforth there was to be no exclusiveness in the tender of Gospel blessings. Wherever the descendants of Adam were to be found, thither the message of redemption was eventually to be wafted. Wherever the blight of sin had fallen, there the news of the great sacrifice was to be proclaimed. Wherever the pollution of sin had

* Matt. xv. 24.

† Matt. xxi. 43.

lodged, there it was to be declared, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Wherever death had tyrannized, or should tyrannize, thither should be borne the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. “Go ye, therefore,” said the risen Saviour,—“go ye, and teach—go ye and evangelize *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

What a pause was that, of solemn and mysterious interest, when, after witnessing the glorious ascension of their Divine Master, the disciples, in obedience to his command, tarried in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high; and having received the promise of the Father,—the wondrous gift of the Holy Ghost,—what a noble field of enterprise stretched out before them! Whereon commenced the mission to the Gentile, as well as the mission to the Jew, with which the infant Church was charged; and soon stood forth the noble-hearted and gifted apostle to the Gentiles,—himself one of the remnant according to the election of grace; and the echo of his

voice still sounds in the Church,—“ I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” What he affirmed, he had witnessed. What he declared, he had proved. It was no fable. It was no phantasma of an ardent temperament which he proclaimed. It was the truth of the Eternal God: the powerful, the influential truth, which, carried home to the heart by the Holy Ghost, through the foolishness of preaching, has swayed its millions, and borne them off, in the triumph of a saving faith, from the sterile strands of sinful degradation and heathen darkness to the broad bosom of the bottomless ocean of God’s covenanted love, and landed them safely on the imperishable shores of a heavenly inheritance, so that we may say of them, “ Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator

of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."*

When the first Gentile heart, touched by the irresistible Spirit of God, responded to the truth, exercising "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," then it was that the actual grafting of the Gentile Church upon the stem of Abraham commenced, and the better covenant began to have its large and more extensive fulfilment.† Every successive triumph which the preached Gospel has achieved has been but another and another step in the development of the Divine promise made to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed;" and henceforward, till the last sound of Gospel announcement shall have gone forth,—till the last name in the Lamb's Book of Life shall have yielded the obedience of faith, and till the cry shall be heard, "Behold, he cometh,"—the engrafting shall continue, till every branch of the wild olive tree, on which the elective grace of God shall have rested from eternity, will be made to partake of the root and fatness of the olive; till, in the language of the apostle, the Gentiles which followed not

* Heb. xii. 22—24.

† Acts xiii.

after righteousness, shall have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith."*

The true standing, then, of the Gentile Church is on the sure foundation of the better covenant; and she stands, and ever will stand, by faith alone. The faith of God's bestowing, the exercise of which is the engrafting act, is that which (according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus) shall also bind her fast in vital and indissoluble junction with the primal stem, the first-called stock of Abraham. "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of *unbelief* they were broken off; and thou standest by *faith*."

We have yet to notice the prospective purpose connected with the engrafting of the Gentile Church. Early in the history of God's ancient people, we find Jehovah thus speaking in reference to them:—"I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, *children in whom is no faith*. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God: they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: *and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people*." In this passage we have both a present and a pro-

* Rom. ix. 30.

spective view of the characteristic *unbelief* which should be the influential cause of Israel's national rejection, or temporary casting away; and we have also an intimation of God's final purpose towards them, as connected with the calling and engrafting of the Gentile Church. It was that they might thereby be *moved to jealousy*, while beholding the glorious position they had forfeited, and while contemplating the possession of it as enjoyed by those who before had been deemed strangers and foreigners, of no account in the estimation of God,—the refuse of the earth. And now, let us mark how the apostle to the Gentiles has recognised this early intimation; and how, as a Jew, he engrafts upon it the future hope of the apostate Israel: "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather *through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy*. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means *I may provoke to emulation them who are my flesh, and might save some of them*. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the

receiving of them be, but life from the dead?
. . . . And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part (*πρόρωςις ἀπὸ μέρους*,—that is, not partial, but total blindness in respect of the *part*—the numbers of Israel who believed not,) is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (that is, never to be revoked or rescinded): for as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy

(τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει,—that is, through the mercy shown to you) they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” *

I venture not beyond the positive words of Holy Scripture, in touching on this important subject. Enough is stated, and plainly stated too, to deposit in our believing hearts the assurance that the defection of Israel, and the consequent opening of the blessings of the better covenant to the Gentiles, shall eventually, in fulfilment of the Divine intention, result in bringing in the ancient stock of Abraham, at one with the whole spiritual seed of Abraham, the “father of many nations,”—the father of us all that are of the faith of Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile,—to the sure mercies of David; to the imperishable glories of the better covenant; to the exalted dignity of kings and priests unto God and the Father, through Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness; the first-begotten of the dead; the Prince of the kings of the earth; who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And on this blessed assurance may we rest, adoring the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of Him, who maketh even the wrath of man to praise him; who, out of evil bringeth

* Romans xi. 11—15, 23—32.

good; who, out of darkness evolveth light; and, by dispensations disastrous and apparently ruinous, secures the highest interests of immortal man, and brings forth his own glory on its noblest and loftiest elevation. And, however the clouds of the latter day may be gathering; however the forces for the last conflict may be marshalling, light breaks in beyond, and the banners of a glorious triumph are unfurling in the distance. The eye of faith gazes on the light: and the heart of faith throbs while it beholds the banner, longing for the day when the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our God, and of his Christ!

We cannot conclude this imperfect and feeble sketch of a great subject, without a word of practical application to the Gentile Church, whose true standing is on the rock of ages, through the free grace and sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus. And we would speak first in the way of admonition; secondly, in the way of caution; and, lastly, in the way of exhortation, as our text and context suggest to us. We would hold forth our admonition in the words of the apostle, "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." There is danger of this, else the apostle would not have uttered these emphatic words. There is

a tendency in man's fallen nature—aye, even when grace has wrought its marvellous work—to look down from the eminence on which it has been uplifted, with such a self complacency as to throw others less favoured, or apparently less favoured, into the shade. And thus, no doubt, the Gentile Church has acted toward the Jewish; as if her exalted position were independent of the common foundation; or rather as if she were the bearer of the root, rather than borne by the root. To be a Jew was, and in the estimation of some still is, to be the object of contempt, without commiseration—of scorn, without any admixture of sympathy; and all this in proportion to the ignorance which prevailed as to the relative position of the Gentile Church, and of the obligation she is under to the Jewish. But light has broken in upon this subject; and multitudes who looked upon the Jews as the offscouring of the earth, and the abandoned of God, are awakening to a sense of their claims for consideration—are beginning to recognise the ground upon which those claims are based, and discovering that Jewish interests and Gentile privilege are inseparably interwoven. Oh, that this awakening may make progress! Surely it will,—surely it is progressing; and ere long, in the rapidly-developing purposes of God, we may

hope that the last boastful word against the Jew, shall falter into silence on the lip that would utter it. Oh, brethren, "boast not against the branches!"

And receive from me the word of caution. How emphatic are the words of the apostle, "Thou wilt say, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee." If unbelief caused the breaking off of the natural branches, which made room for your engrafting, according to the unsearchable purpose of God, what should hinder a similar consequence of unbelief in your case—in the case of the engrafted branches, in the event of its gaining the mastery over your hearts, in which faith has naturally no abiding place? Your tenure is entirely of faith. Amidst all your high privileges, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." I enter not into the mystery of this matter; nor do I attempt to harmonize the apostle's caution, with the view he elsewhere gives of the final perseverance of the saints. I only press upon you the consideration—and it is a weighty one—that what God manifestly did

towards every unbelieving Jew, he may do towards every Gentile in whose heart there shall be found the leaven of an apostatizing spirit. "Be not high-minded, therefore, but fear."

Lastly, receive from me the word of exhortation. If, in the purpose of God, as we have already seen, the calling of you Gentiles, consequent upon the fall and defection of Israel, was in order to provoke them to jealousy, that they might be awakened to the prospect of restoration, and stimulated to the pursuit of it;—if, in the purpose of God, mercy is eventually to flow down to them, in their low estate, through the instrumentality (so to speak) of mercy so wondrously displayed to you, then do you not see how intimately you are, at this moment, concerned in everything that concerns the Jew? Do you not perceive that every privilege you possess, is to be enjoyed in positive relation to the Jew? And, therefore, can you be truly Christians, and yet careless of the Jew? Let us, then, seek at all times to manifest a becoming interest in a people for whom so much is yet in store, according to the inexhaustible compassion and mercy of God. Let us ever present to them the scriptural simplicity and the godly sincerity of the Christian character, that they, beholding in us the excellence of the religion

we profess, may be led to inquire, to examine, and at length to embrace it; and so go up to that position of safety and of honour which is yet to be accessible to them under the better covenant.

LECTURE VII.

THE RESTORATION OF THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL.

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ACTS I. 6.

“ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? ”

EZEKIEL XXXVII. 21, 22.

“ And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land : And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all :

and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

THERE are no words which can adequately express that condescension in God, by which he enables the sinful offspring of rebellious man to know beforehand any of his purposes of mercy, of wisdom, and of glory. Yet has he conveyed such knowledge in his Word, the open page of which lies before every man: it needs, however, the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost to make that page intelligible, as it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."*

May that Holy Spirit beam forth his light upon our minds, and shed abroad his fire in our hearts, while we endeavour, under his teaching, to learn whatsoever God hath permitted us to know concerning the renewed glory of the kingdom of his people Israel!

It may be necessary, at the beginning of this enquiry, to ascertain with some scriptural precision, the ground we may have, in the present age, for expecting such a renewal of Israel's

* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

glory. It is because of vague notions on this point, and undefined doubts which are permitted to possess the mind, that the anticipated glory fails to work all the effect on our practical Christianity, which it might be reasonable to hope for, and therefore the moments will not be lost in which we endeavour to lay a sure foundation for our anticipations.

It was at a season of the most peculiar interest that the disciples of Christ put the question to the Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" If any circumstances could be supposed to suppress the idleness of mere curiosity, and to engross the mind with such subjects as were of paramount importance, they must surely be found in the position of the disciples at this time. All the unbelief of the early days of the resurrection had been overcome by the occasional intercourse, during forty days, with their risen Lord: they saw him in as much of his Messiahship as their minds were enabled to conceive; and at the moment that he repeated to them the promise of the Father, and explained it to mean the descent of the Holy Ghost within a few days, they gave expression to their most earnest and important desires, in seeking to be informed whether the kingdom was about to be restored to Israel. Their question

was put in a form that showed that they spoke as one Jew would speak to another of matters equally understood by both; *the* kingdom meant a definite dominion, known in its character, by both, and by both expected to be restored.

In examining the reply that was made by our Lord, we must remember that there are several instances of questions being put to him by persons who held mistaken notions on the points of their enquiry, and in every case we find that he rectified the mistake in answering the question. He was demanded of the Pharisees when a certain kingdom should come, which they called the kingdom of God:* but under that phrase they entertained an erroneous conception of the kingdom; and Jesus answered them by instructing them in the spirituality of God's kingdom, of which they were ignorant. He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Then turning to his own disciples, who were present, he guarded them against the danger of misapplying this remark, so as to exclude the notion of his visible return, warning them that, during his long absence from the earth, the cry of "Lo here!" and "Lo there!" would be

* Luke xvii. 20, &c.

raised to mislead them, but that such signs would certainly be false, since when he returned to the earth, he would come suddenly, like a flash of lightning. In both these cases we have strongly marked the Lord's care in guarding the mind from erroneous notions.

Again; a question of a similar nature was put to Jesus by one who was totally ignorant of the subject. Pilate asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"* Before Jesus answered, he drew forth from the heathen governor the statement that he did not put the question in a Jewish sense: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"† "Am I a Jew?"‡ said Pilate. Then Jesus explained to him, that although he was the King of the Jews, yet that the Roman Governor need fear no struggle for power, such as was suggested to the heathen's mind by the notion of a rival king. "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."§

From our Lord's conduct upon these occasions we may very safely conclude, that if his own apostles had put to him the question in the text

* John xviii. 33, &c.

† Ibid. xviii. 34.

‡ Ibid. xviii. 35.

§ Ibid. xviii. 36.

under mistaken notions with respect to the kingdom of Israel, he would certainly have rectified their error. Instead, however, of giving the least hint as to any mistake on their parts, he told them that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, and thereby justified them and us in entertaining the expectation that the kingdom of Israel shall be restored, however hidden from us may be the period of that restoration.

But this argument of a negative kind is strongly enforced by others of a more positive nature. Several circumstances had recently occurred, in which the conduct of our Lord had been distinctly calculated to confirm those notions of the kingdom of Israel, and of its restoration at some time or other, which were habitually entertained by the disciples. When our Lord had entered Jerusalem in that triumphant manner, which at once fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah that described Zion's King coming to Jerusalem, "lowly, and riding upon an ass;"* and at the same time typified the glory of the future kingdom, the people "went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."† And again, "Blessed be the kingdom of our

* Zech. ix. 9.

† John xii. 13.

father David: Hosanna in the highest."* Jesus not only permitted these expressions from Jewish lips and Jewish hearts, but when the Pharisees would have had him repress them, and rebuke his disciples, he told them, "that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."† And as the children joined in the cry, the Lord declared that they fulfilled the Scripture, which saith, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."‡ This public incident followed but three days upon a voluntary statement, made privately by our Lord, which was distinctly directed to confirm the notions which his Jewish disciples must have entertained with respect to the kingdom of Israel. Jesus had assured them, "that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."§ Within a few days after this, the Lord took the solemn occasion of the last Passover, and the very moment of instituting the ordinance of the Supper, to repeat this assurance to his apostles,—“I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed

* Mark xi. 10.

† Luke xix. 40.

‡ Matt. xxi. 16.

§ Matt. xix. 28.

unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

It was with the recent occurrence of all these circumstances solemnly impressed upon their minds, and at the moment when the Saviour, fresh from his victory over death, declared to them the near approach of the great gift of the Holy Ghost, that these Jews asked whether he would then restore again the kingdom to Israel. And as they received for answer nothing to alter their expectations as regards the kingdom, we dare not doubt that Jesus sanctioned those expectations in them, and that he warrants us to entertain similar anticipations.

Yet, if it should be urged by some who cannot receive their notions of the kingdom, that these disciples were yet without the enlightening power of the Holy Ghost, there is a word recorded in the register of that rush of thought and truth which flowed from Peter under the first outpouring of that marvellous current from on high, which establishes at once that the views of the inspired Apostle were unaltered by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. In the Pentecostal discourse Peter has occasion to quote Psalm xvi., and proves that it prophesied of Jesus; but in proving

* Luke xxii. 29, 30.

this, he shows that Jesus was raised from the grave, fulfilling the prophecy, in order that he might sit on David's throne, as pledged by the oath which God had sworn unto his father according to the flesh: "Therefore, being a prophet,"* &c. Peter here speaks of Jesus risen from the dead to sit on David's throne, even as it had been declared of him by the angel who was sent on the message to Mary.† And this is a point which requires especial attention, since, by a careless inversion of thought, too many are accustomed to confuse themselves with the notion of David having typified a spiritual kingdom belonging to Christ, and so to lose the sense of the words which speak of Christ sitting on David's throne, in a vague thought of David having sat on Christ's throne.

If we would gather up a clear understanding of what it has pleased God to open before us in Scripture concerning his purposes yet unfulfilled, we must establish our minds in a right view upon this subject. There are other materials in God's Word to help us in this respect; but I place these several points before you, commending them to your serious and prayerful consideration. May the Spirit of truth guide each of our minds therein!

* Acts ii. 30, 31.

† Luke i. 32, 33.

But in what condition have the Jews been since the ascension of our Lord and the descent of the Holy Ghost? Nearly eighteen centuries have rolled away, during the greater part of which the Israel according to the flesh has been emphatically a people "scattered and peeled, meted out and trodden down,"* and yet a people. Within forty years they were given up, as a nation, to infatuated blindness; their blood was shed like water, their cities were razed, their temple,—the desire of their eyes, God's holy and beautiful house,—was burnt with fire, and Jerusalem was made an heap of ruins. Nothing like dominion and power,—a kingdom and a throne,—can in any way be connected with the history of the literal Israel from that time to this. To us these eighteen centuries seem a period stretching out into a symbol of eternity; but to that God who called the world into existence, and became the Son of David that he might be King of the Jews, eighteen centuries are but as the passing seconds of an hour; and although that period were multiplied by millions, yet, if the Word of God has passed, and the disciples on Mount Olivet were justified in expecting that the kingdom should be restored

* Isa. xviii. 2.

to Israel, sooner or later it shall come to pass,—
“Let God be true, and every man a liar.”

This leads us to inquire, whether we can discover more accurately and precisely what were the notions entertained by the disciples, thus warranted by the Lord himself, and sealed on the apostles' minds by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Without being able to pierce into the hearts of the apostles, and discern their spirits, so as to know what thoughts they entertained in putting their question, we may yet know the thoughts which they ought to have had, since, through the mercy of God, we possess the same Divine oracles from which alone they could have received correct notions of the kingdom they expected. Full of the interest which befits such a search, we must turn to the words of the prophets, and from these we may select, as a specimen of those glorious descriptions which abound, the passage from Ezekiel I have read with the text. This will open to us some prominent points in the right view of the kingdom of Israel. We must read the context from the eleventh verse of the chapter. God had represented in a vision to the prophet the valley full of dry bones, and had gone through the process of their resurrection to a living condition. He

then proceeds to explain the meaning of the vision.*

Without attempting to pause over every portion of this interesting vision, we will gather up to the mind the several points that must be involved in the fulfilment of this prophecy, according to the notions which were legitimately suggested to the mind of Ezekiel, and would have been justified in that of every Jew who read his record of this Divine promise.

1. The prominent idea, which must have excited the same kind of wonder then as it does now, and thereby attracted all the attention of the Jewish hearer, is the fact, that the succession of the ten tribes, which more especially went by the name of Israel, though they had been buried amongst the nations of the world for 134 years before the moment of the vision, as completely out of sight as a dead body in the grave,—yet that they should reappear upon the theatre of the world, and should form part again of the combined family of that Jacob to whom God had at first given the name of Israel. In order to render this more clear than the simple use of the phrase, “the whole house of Israel,” had made it, God taught it by the representation of an allegorical action, which could leave no

* Read Ezek. xxxvii. 11—28.

room for misapprehension, for doubt, or for difficulty. If the fact intended by that action was true in the purpose of God 134 years after the death of the nation, it is equally true in that unchangeable purpose 2,000 years after the day of its burial, even though men may have forgotten to mark the place of the grave that hides its bones. Yes, "Judah, and the children of Israel his companions" shall yet form one nation with "Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his fellows."

2. It appears from this prophecy, secondly, that these several parts of the one family of Israel are to be gathered from amongst the Heathen, or Gentile nations, whose countries "lie on every side" of the Holy Land; that is, that the twelve tribes shall be brought from their dispersion into all countries, from the north, from the south, from the east, and from the west.

3. That from this dispersion their gathering home is to be into what is called their "own land,"—"the mountains of Israel,"—"the land which God gave unto Jacob his servant,"—"the land wherein their fathers have dwelt." These several descriptions are multiplied in the passage, so as to leave no room for mistake in the interpretation of the place of the kingdom of Israel.

4. It is of no small moment to observe, that the continuance of the dwelling of these restored Israelites is not stated in terms which belong to the passing of time alone, but that it is declared, that these united Israelites "shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever." While this mode of statement does not limit the period of the promised kingdom, it manifests that they of whom it is spoken are men whose race shall be continued as it is at present, and upon whose bodies it is impossible that that great change shall have taken place, by which the present body becomes fashioned like unto the glorious body of those who have partaken of the resurrection from amongst the dead, of whom our Lord declared that they "neither marry nor are given in marriage."* The Jews, therefore, of the restored kingdom must be still men and women, in a different condition of being from the saints of the Most High after the period of the first resurrection.

5. This prophecy bids us expect that the whole tribes, as one nation, shall be united under one King, and that that King must be He who may be called David, Jehovah's Servant;—"He shall be their Prince for ever."

* Luke xx. 35.

6. And not only shall the master sin of Israel be put away, so that none "shall defile themselves any more with their idols," but they shall be cleansed altogether from all their sins.

7. In order to the perfect result of this cleansing, the Spirit of God himself, the Holy Ghost, shall be in them, and they shall know the true God, and they shall be his people, and He shall be their God. And the fruit of this spiritual knowledge of the true God shall be holiness before Him, and before all men, and "they shall walk in his judgments, and observe his statutes to do them."

8. The continuance of this holy and happy state shall be based upon the bond of Jehovah himself; for he says, he "will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant."

9. God will not leave them without the token of his visible presence; but he will set his "sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore," and his own dwelling-place—his tabernacle, shall be with them.

10. Yet one more point stands forth to our observation in this passage; for, tenthly, there shall be a people around them dwelling in the earth, not of the kindred of Abraham, claiming no community with the blood of Jacob, yet living

under the shadow of his branches ; dwelling safely in the refuge of his mountain ; receiving, through the people of Israel, the knowledge of the true God ; while they visit his sanctuary, and learn the excellence of his character, according to the holiness he imparts to his peculiar nation.

These ten points stand forth, presenting so much at least of the detail of the kingdom of Israel, as this one prophecy combines. And the appetite, which the perusal of this may excite, for more complete explanation and confirmation of the picture it presents to the mind, may be abundantly satisfied by searching the inspired pages of all the prophets.

We may go back from Ezekiel, who wrote in the midst of the Babylonish captivity, to Jeremiah, whose prophecy was given by God at the beginning of that period ; and yet further back to Isaiah ; and we shall find each full of particulars, of repetitions, of details, all contributing to a more perfect knowledge and assurance of this glorious kingdom of Israel, and all in consistency with Ezekiel's account. We may go still further back to the inspiration of him who sat on the throne of the original kingdom, and typified the true David and his dominion, as much as can be done by a type, the materials of which are tainted with the corruption that shall

pass away with the anti-type. And in the songs of the Psalmist, we may find those prophetic declarations which, when seen by the light of the more distinct statements of the later prophets, present no doubtful representation of this kingdom of Israel, for expecting the restoration of which we have already shown our high authority.

Interesting as would be the search for these scriptural confirmations of that prophecy of Ezekiel which is before us, there is a point which seems to have more immediate claim upon our interest; and we will therefore occupy the little time which can be devoted to our subject, in an inquiry how far we may be able to trace the course of circumstances, through which the transition is to be made from the present position of the world, of the Church, and of the Jews, to that holy and happy state of things, of which we have caught a prophetic glimpse—the days when the kingdom shall be restored again to Israel.

It can only be from the revelation of future events which God has been pleased to make in his Scripture, that we can gather any safe grounds for our expectations on this more interesting point; but the manner in which these revelations have been made through the prophets affords us the means of forming many anticipations of deep interest and of practical value.

None can look into futurity, and say what shall be on the morrow. But He who knew the end in the beginning has pleased, from time to time, to draw the curtain which hides futurity from the prophet's eye; and as that eye gazed intently forward into the dark, the Almighty One has made the rays of light from his prescience to fall on certain objects in the prospect, so that those, and those alone, were presented to the prophet's view at that time. Again and again have such visions been vouchsafed to various chosen ones among the sons of men, who, by God's command, have registered them for our learning. At various times God lighted up such portions of the future as it suited his special object to disclose on each occasion. The prophets saw one course of events at one time, and other intervening circumstances in perspective at another time; and thus many passages in the world's path were lighted up, and through the prophets' mind reflected on the page of God's Book. On that page again the light from heaven must pour its rays, in order that the things described therein may live to the eye, and in the mind of those who read it now; but such as are thus privileged possess the great advantage of being able to compare the various glances that at different times were thus vouchsafed of old; and

rectifying the position of one event in the mind, by bringing it into contact with another, revealed at a different time, or through a different prophet, we, on whom the ends of the dispensation are come, may obtain, through God's teaching, such an understanding of the whole that has been revealed, as may enable us to look from height to height in the prospect of prophecy; and so to take our land-marks, as to perceive the course of the way, though we cannot trace the road through the detail of many a valley.

In forecasting our look in order to such an arrangement of prophetic events, the first point seems to be, to discover some nearer standing-ground than that state of the restored kingdom which is lighted up on the horizon before us. And there is no difficulty in finding such an intermediate point; because, though Jehovah did not fail to leave the door of hope always open to the mind of the Jew in every prophecy, by some word more or less distinctly referring to the final glory of the kingdom, yet, upon most occasions, the present purpose of God was to warn, to alarm, to chide, to reprove the rebellious generations of the people, who yet possessed the covenant right of inheritance to the kingdom. And therefore he has introduced prophetic records of a state in which the Jews are to be

found, but characterised by events entirely incompatible with the condition of the restored kingdom: and as no portion of their history has yet realized that state, the fulfilment of that part of prophecy is yet to come; and this must give us a foreground for the picture of the future glory of Israel, from which we may, perhaps, be able to trace the perspective even to the end.

To illustrate this more clearly, we may take one of the most connected of the prophetic declarations which lead on to the account of the restored kingdom,—that, for instance, contained in the latter part of the prophecy of Zechariah. And here we shall find a description of the city of Jerusalem, inhabited by Jews, under what are called “the governors of Judah;” but surrounded by enemies causing destruction and death amongst them, and being themselves the subjects of similar horrors. The time will not permit us to refer to the various passages in all the prophets which speak of a similar state of things. Now, this must be before the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, for one of the characteristics of that kingdom is, that the Lord “will extend peace to her like a river;”* that this shall be a permanent, unbroken, and abiding peace; that the people of the nations “shall

* Isaiah lxvi. 12.

beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: neither shall they learn war any more.”* And with greater particularity as regards the point in question, it is written of that kingdom, “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”†

Now, the prophecy of Jehovah by Zechariah was delivered at the time of the return from Babylon; and that part of it to which we refer could not have been fulfilled at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and if not then, it never has been fulfilled yet. Without entering more minutely into the detail of the twelfth chapter, it will be sufficient for the object we have now in view, to draw attention to the statement in the sixth verse,—“that Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.” This stands in strong contrast with what is subsequently said in the same prophecy, in a part which evidently refers to the restored kingdom,—“There shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be SAFELY inhabited.”‡ The former statement stands in connexion with a fearful destruction, which it proceeds to relate.

* Isaiah ii. 4.

† Isaiah lxxv. 25.

‡ Zech. xiv. 11.

There is, then, to be a time when the city of Jerusalem shall be inhabited by Jews, previous to the time when it shall be *safely* inhabited.

The question immediately arises, whether this preparatory inhabiting of Jerusalem is to be connected with that resurrection of the buried tribes, which we have seen to be a distinct feature in the restored kingdom? And here we find a guiding mark, which leaves us no doubt that the preparatory inhabiting of Jerusalem is *not* to be connected with the revival of Ephraim. The prophet Zechariah, before the latter part of the vision was opened to him, does indeed make a reference to the re-uniting of the whole twelve tribes. He tells us that the Lord said, "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them."* But this has no reference whatever to that part of the prophecy we are considering; and it serves, therefore, to show the more clearly, that the exclusive mention of the tribe of Judah afterwards, was a significant exclusion of the tribes of Ephraim in this preparatory inhabiting of Jerusalem. But the matter is set at rest by the fact, that when it is said, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem,"† the words that

* Zech. x. 6.

† Zech. xii. 7.

follow are, "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah FIRST:" and the singular expression, "the tents (or tabernacles) of Judah," serves to distinguish this period of uncertain dwelling from that of which it is emphatically declared, "They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."*

Here, then, we have obtained a starting point from which we may proceed in the endeavour to harmonize the detail of those prophecies which speak of the circumstances of the restoration to Israel. A time will come when, of those wandering children of Abraham of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with their Levites, who carry the mark of the covenant and claim the name of Jew as they wander in their dispersion in all lands, some shall have pitched their tents upon Mount Zion, with however trembling a tenure they may hold their inheritance. The prophecy which tells us this speaks of no Prince, no alone King at that preparatory period;—it is not the kingdom of Israel yet. We hear, indeed, of "the governors of Judah,"†—the council of

* Isaiah lxx. 21, 22.

† Zech. xii. 5, 6.

chiefs, it may be, that administer the rule in the city,—the wealthier ones among them,—the rabbies of to-day,—and then we hear of “a gathering of all nations against Jerusalem to battle,”*—a mighty confederacy, capable of crushing the little remnant of the circumcised ones,—hosts that might tear from off the land the scarcely rooted people that in providence have been planted there. Then, too, we hear of the manifestation of their power on the devoted city;—its walls shall be breached,—the assault shall be made,—the city shall be taken, and surrendered to the reckless pillage of the godless victors. But then, too, we hear that the inhabitants of the tents of Judah have an army of relief of which they knew not;—He who commands them has his forces at hand, and brought them not before to the battle that the heart of the Jew might be emptied of his pride, in order to receive the fulness that was about to be poured into it, and that the infidel nations might be caught in the crown of their pride, in order that at its very height it might be broken in judgment; for then shall the incarnate Jehovah himself “defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem;”† and “shall go forth to fight against those nations,” and “his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.”‡

* Zech. xiv. 2. † Ibid. xii. 8. ‡ Ibid. xiv. 3, 4.

Now, too, we hear of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon these rescued Jews, and the conversion of their hearts to Jesus; the Divine Spirit working that effect in them, by the sight of the Saviour in his glory, which he is working now in the hearts of his elect saints by the faith of his atonement. Then that conviction of sin, which has sent us, dear brethren in Christ, apart from the world to commune with our own hearts and be still, shall make each Jew at Jerusalem to seek some solitary place to mourn, even as in bitterness for a firstborn. "For thus, saith the Lord, it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family

of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."*

When we have striven to realize the prospect thus pictured to us through the words of the prophet Zechariah, then may we be able to see something more of orderly arrangement in that group of figures that occupies the page of Ezekiel in a more advanced passage of the text. Then we begin to comprehend something more of the preparations and campaign mapped out in the thirty-eighth chapter of his prophecy,—so briefly stated by Zechariah,—Jehovah "will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;"—"Jehovah shall go forth to fight against those nations;"—He says, "I will seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem." These are drawn out into particulars when the Word of the Lord is given to Ezekiel. There we may trace the workings of the thoughts that moved the rulers of the nations to go up and "take a spoil and take a prey;" there we may hear the Lord "call for a sword" against these enemies, and we may see every man's sword answer the call by being lifted up against his brother. There we may mark the fire that shall go forth against

* Zech. xii. 9—14.

them that dwell carelessly in the isles to make them understand that Jehovah is God indeed, and to make his holy name known in the midst of his people Israel, and to manifest to the heathen that Jehovah Jesus is the Holy One in Israel.

Having traced these links in the chain, we rejoice to find that to the enlarged account which Jehovah has been pleased to give through Ezekiel (from the thirty-seventh to the thirty-ninth chapters) of that decisive day, he has been pleased to add a summary of the consequences which will result to his people Israel,—the several particulars of which may be used as indexes pointing to previous prophecies, in which various events of interest and of glory may be seen as sparkling promises, sprinkled here and there, to shine on the dark garments of humiliation which Jehovah in anger prepared for his people from time to time. And by the indexes in this summary we may be directed to these several jewels, and, gathering them from their various separated positions, may form them into the glorious crown of the restored kingdom of Israel. Let us read the passage itself: “Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and

burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand-staves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the noses of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamon-gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown, the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God. And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. And also the name of the

city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land. And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done

unto them, and hid my face from them. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."*

Here we may picture the burying after the battle,—a weary work of seven long months,—to form a horrible heap for the fire of ages; for Isaiah tells us that "it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the

* Ezek. xxxix. 8—29.

men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." *

Here, too, we may see the storing of the spoil of military machinery that will leave the Lebanon a seven years' rest from the axe of the woodman. Here, too, we find the date assigned by Jehovah to the opening of the tomb of the ten tribes for their exhumation; for "Now, saith the Lord God, will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel." † Then may we discover the position of those events which stand at the end of Isaiah's prophecy,—that the Lord will send those Jews, that escape out of the pillage of Jerusalem through the defence and victory of the Lord, into the various nations of the world in order to seek out for their brethren, the hidden ones; and as they go from land to land, and inquire for the traces of an Israelite, they shall tell of the glory of Jesus and proclaim the wonders he has wrought at Jerusalem; and the hearts of the Gentiles shall be made willing to hear, and shall be turned to love the people that have taught them the glad tidings; and all their energies shall be exercised in conveying the whole nation from every part

* Isa. lxvi. 23, 24.

† Ezek. xxxix. 25.

to the land of their inheritance; for then it is that "the present shall be brought unto the Lord of a people scattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled."* For Jehovah tells us, by the mouth of Isaiah, that he "will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord."†

Neither shall they be sent alone to their land; for "thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray

* Isa. xviii. 7.

† Isa. lxvi. 19, 20.

before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

And then, too, Jehovah will "create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."† Now, surely now, the Lord Jesus has restored again the kingdom to Israel, and now, too, "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

While the splendour of this prospect rivets the attention, it suggests also a further inquiry. We have traced the track of prophetic history from the point which we have taken up in the foreground of the picture,—from the preparatory inhabiting of the Holy City, the pitching of the tents of a few Jews who venture to tread the soil. But there are no such tents reared on Mount Zion yet; and may we not strive to ascertain whether the holy oracles supply any links by which we may connect that event with our present position in history? Did our Lord say nothing to his inquiring apostles which may suggest a thought upon the subject. We turn to the largest statement which he was pleased to

* Zech. viii. 20—23.

† Isa. lxxv. 18—25.

make bearing distinctly the prophetic character, and to which he gave all the solemnity of dying words, for they were the last of his public ministry, and delivered not many hours before his death. In the course of his prophetic explanation given upon the Mount of Olives, after leaving the temple for the last time, Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when there was great distress in the Holy Land, and wrath upon the Jews; and when they fell by thousands by the edge of the sword. Then he spoke of the dispersion foretold by the prophets of old, and said that the Jews should be led away captive into all nations, and that Jerusalem should be desecrated by the dominion of others than the people of Abraham to whom it belonged. But he affixed a term, at once for this desolation of Jerusalem, and this dispersion of her covenant-people, by telling us that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* So long as a people who are not of the blood of Jacob wield the supreme power in the Holy City, be they Roman or Turcoman, Jerusalem will continue to be trodden down of the Gentiles; and nothing can alter this character of its condition,

* Luke xxi. 24.

but the fact that some Jews, as Jews, administer the government in that city. Then the face of its affairs will bear a feature corresponding with the picture presented through the prophet Zechariah, when he speaks of "the governors of Judah;" and by this means we may drag the chain of present history, and link it to that nearest ring of the chain we have already wrought out of the mine of Scripture.

Up to the time when the affairs of Palestine shall have assumed this feature, it were vain to expect any of those events which we have seen to be chronologically placed beyond it. But a state of things is involved in our Lord's words, which opens to us our very present position. We are living in "the times of the Gentiles,"—those times which touch upon the era of that preparatory supremacy of Jews in the Holy City. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This is the word of THE TRUTH; therefore "the times of the Gentiles" must continue as long as an uncircumcised one bears rule on Mount Zion. But the instant that the foot of such a one can no more tread in power over the city of David, those times have ceased; for as the Gentile dominion there exists *until*

those times are fulfilled, those times must continue *until* the Jews shall rule there, and no longer.

What, then, are the times of the Gentiles? Take the words of St. James at the first Council at Jerusalem, in explanation,—“Men and brethren,” said the apostle, “hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”* The times during which God visits by his Gospel “every kindred and tongue, and people and nation,” in order that “*out of them*” may be taken a people to glorify the name of Christ “in the dispensation of the fulness of times”† for ever,—a people who can appropriate, in everlasting reality, the new song in the prophetic vision of the Apocalypse, “For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”‡ The times for this Evangelic gathering, these are the times of the Gentiles; and they must be fulfilled ere any of the wandering sons of Judah pitch their tents within the walls of Jerusalem, and exercise a municipal authority there.

But we have another statement, made by the

* Acts xv. 13, 14. † Eph. i. 10. ‡ Rev. v. 9, 10.

Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul, in which the great facts that give their vast importance to this crisis, are poised upon a centre, that is made to turn upon an equally emphatic UNTIL. Writing to the Romans, the apostle says, that he would not have us Christians ignorant of the mystery concerning the prolongation of the Jewish depression in spiritual and in political matters, for fear we should be wise in our own conceits. He tells us that blindness and hardness continue to characterize such portion of the Jewish people as are not of the remnant according to the election of grace, as he had already explained; but that this continuance was for a purpose of mercy to the Gentiles, in order that the election of grace from amongst *them* might be gathered in, and prepared for the inheritance of the saints in light; that the blindness to the Jews was abiding, in order that the light should reach to the fulness of the Gentiles; and it will abide *until* that object is attained. The last saint whose name is written in the Book of Life must be reached by Divine grace, through faith. The dispensation of the withdrawal of God's countenance from the Jews, is measured precisely by the length of the dispensation of his turning to the Gentiles; as though God turns his back to the ancient Israel according to the

flesh, all the while he turns his face to look in every corner of the world for the Israel according to the Spirit: and when he shall have accomplished that great purpose, then will he turn back again, and look upon Mount Zion, and not before. And so it is, says the apostle, that the events particularized by the prophet Isaiah in the fifty-ninth chapter shall be set forth in the course of fulfilment; for when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, then the national Israel, yea, "all Israel shall be saved" in the manner described by that prophet, through whom Jehovah declared, "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. . . . Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."* "For I would

* Isa. lix. 19—21; lx. 1.

not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”*

But there is yet one event connected with the kingdom restored to Israel, which we have hitherto passed over in silence, but which must have words,—may the Holy Spirit give words of power!—to take its place in these stirring anticipations. We have seen that Jerusalem shall be given up to pillage, and that, in the depth of their humiliation and distress, the Jews will see a sight—Oh! that indescribable sight,—“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced,” even on Jehovah Jesus—the Eternal Son of God made man—the King—the true David! But who are they that encircle him with rays of living glory, crowding the very corners of the picture, each one bearing the Royal image; each in a body fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He, the Almighty One, has

* Rom. xi. 25—27.

subdued their bodies of humiliation to himself? Brethren, is there not a glow of feeling that burns with joy within us, while we indeed dare not, out of our yet vile bodies, to utter the sound that claims those places for ourselves? *There* is the inheritance of the saints in light; *that* is the special privilege,—to see the Saviour as he is;—to be like him;—to have awakened up in his likeness;—to be ever with him;—to sit on his throne, which he will give to us, while he sits on his Father's throne;—to administer his universal dominion, and to be, through his blood, “kings and priests unto God,” “reigning on the earth.” This, this is the object for which the Lord has set apart a time to visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. This is the reason why the Lord yet averts his face from his people Israel, until he shall have accomplished the number of his elect, in order that when he, the one King, the true David, shall from his throne in heaven administer the restored kingdom of Israel, he may be surrounded with that court of kings, to magnify his glory in heaven and in earth. And therefore it is said, that when “his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives,” to defend Jerusalem and destroy the nations that come against it, “The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”*

* Zech. xiv. 5.

are we told that, in order to get them to bring with him, the Lord,—he himself, “shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

Thus, then, the prospect of the restored kingdom to Israel may be connected in our anticipations with our present position, by the beacon lights of those prominent events pictured on the prophetic page. In one rapid glance over this vast scene of history, which the rays of a present sun has not yet brought into the existence of to-day, we may catch the points enlightened by God’s revelation in this order.

1. We are living in the times of the Gentiles, when the Gospel-power is adding to the Church daily such as shall be saved.

2. This Gospel-work must be completed in the conversion of every one whose name is written in the Book of Life; when the prayer of the Church shall have been heard, and God will have accomplished the number of his elect in order to hasten his kingdom.

3. By that time providential circumstances will have ordered that a band of Jews shall have

* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

attained to a political existence in the city of Jerusalem, as distinguished from the possession of the whole land of Palestine.

4. Then will the great infidel confederacy ripen into action, when "the kings of the earth and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Christ,"*—when the theatre of war will be the great valley between the Mediterranean and the holy mountain.

5. Then will the faith of a Jew, as a Jew, be proved to be powerless; for the people who professed to be the people of God shall find themselves deserted of Him, and their enemies shall overcome them.

6. And then shall the cloud open that has hitherto got no further towards the earth than where it paused to receive the risen saints,—Jesus shall appear surrounded by them,—the Spirit shall be poured out upon the Jews, and the wrath shall be poured out upon their enemies.

7. Then comes the cleansing of the land, and the possessing of the land.

8. Then the going forth of the few sons of Judah to search for the many children of Israel.

9. Then the homeward flight as doves to their

* Psalm ii. 2.

windows of the Christian Jews, and their loving Gentile escorts.

10. And thus will be brought into being the covenanted glory long waited for,—postponed by sin,—conceded by mercy: at that time God will restore again the kingdom to Israel.

I dare not let you depart, my beloved brethren, under the solemn sense of these prophetic realities, without a few words of exhortation, pointing to the personal, practical effect, which the contemplation of this great subject ought to have upon each of our hearts. Time will not permit me to dwell on this important portion of the duty which has been assigned to me in treating of the subject of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. I would merely point out to you the road on which these thoughts should set you forward actively to walk. I cannot do more than this,—I dare not do less. Three such directing thoughts occur at once to the Christian's mind.

I. Am I a partaker of the glorious hope belonging to the saints in light? How have these times of the Gentiles wrought their work upon my soul? Am I called to this surpassing wonder? Is my walk worthy of this calling? Is it according to those good works which God has before ordained that his saints should walk in? Do I live in the midst of a world that lieth in

the wicked one, as having my citizenship in heaven,—not of this world, but letting my light shine plainly as being one of the children of the light?

II. Again: if I have this hope, and am striving therefore to purify myself by the Spirit of God, as God is pure, am I diligently endeavouring to bring the defiling work of sin in the world to an end, by furthering, to the utmost of my power, that great present purpose of God throughout this dispensation, of gathering from among the Gentiles a people for his name? What have I done to promote the publication of the Gospel in all parts of the world? What care have I taken that the means of publication shall truly convey the Gospel of Christ in especial contradistinction to the subtle forgeries of Antichrist, who has refined his forms of deceit in the present world? With what amount of self-denial do I promote these great ends? And does the fashion of my self-denial manifest that I believe that the establishment of the kingdom of Christ is of higher importance than the enjoyment of the kingdom of the world?

III. And, lastly, with what consistency of action am I interested in the interests of Israel? In turning over and over the soil of the Scriptures, which contains so much of the rich gold

for the glory of Israel, besides the more evident portions of this precious metal, the sifting brings to light some sparklings of brightness, out of the very dust, as it may be said, which seem to warrant a hope that the times of the Gentiles may possibly be intended to close with something of the same kind of mercy to Israel as that with which they began. The remnant, according to the election of grace is selected from the Jews, as a nation, for the higher honour of taking their part with the saints from among all nations; and in the gathering of these elect saints—the general Church for the spiritual throne—the first nation thus honoured was the Jews. Nay, that honour was exclusive to them for the first ten years of the times of the Gentiles; the conversion of Cornelius was in the eleventh year after the Ascension, and the Pentecostal thousands that filled the Church till then were all circumcised, though they were afterwards baptized. We dare not say that similar to this will be the close of the times of the Gentiles; but reasons are not wanting which lead to the hope, that a great gathering in of the remnant to whom blindness has not happened will be reserved for the glories of the latter days. What, then, are we doing for the Jews? What for their conversion to Christianity? What to prepare their hearts to

receive Jehovah in contrition and repentance? Without such acts as consist with a spiritual and a scriptural interest, as Christians we may be treating God's Word as a fairy tale, and madly playing with a subject as an amusement which holds the highest place in God's purposes, for the solemn justification of his justice, in connexion with the manifestation of his mercy.

LECTURE VIII.

THE LOVE OF CHRISTIANS TO THE JEWS THE
SIGNAL OF GOD'S RETURNING MERCY TO
ZION, WITH THE BENEFITS THENCE FLOW-
ING TO THE GENTILES.

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PSALM CII. 13—15.

*“Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
for the time to favour her, yea, the set time,
is come. For thy servants take pleasure in
her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So
the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord,
and all the kings of the earth thy glory.”*

THE Word of God, as all Christians allow, is a revelation to the whole world. If, however, we open the inspired volume, we are surprised at observing, that by far the greater portion is

occupied with the laws and history of a particular people. The Old Testament forms three parts of the sacred volume, and this, with the exception of the Book of Job and the few first chapters of Genesis, refers, almost exclusively, to the ancient people of God. For, to extend our observations further to the prophets, whilst in these there are some Gentile predictions, a considerable number of which are, perhaps, fulfilled, yet they contain, generally, Jewish history, and Jewish prophecies, for the most part, we apprehend, or at least to a great degree, unfulfilled.

The Spirit of God, by whom the Scriptures were given, testifying thus extensively to one peculiar people, it surely is the mind of God that towards that people our attention should be directed, especially when we further consider, that through men of that nation the Gospel was preached to us Gentiles, and that from them, "as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

I shall not now stop to show how sadly we have departed from the analogy of Scripture by neglecting the Jew, by closing, or perverting to Gentile use, the prophecies which belong to him, but rather, blessing God for having turned the minds of many of the present generation to take an interest in Israel, and to search into the page of Jewish prophecy, I will pass to the considera-

tion of what is said concerning God's ancient people in the Scripture before us;—"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory."

We must here first clear the way by showing that this Scripture has not yet received its fulfilment.

The whole Psalm, apparently, is the prayer of a believing Israelite to the Jehovah of ver. 12, addressed as God in ver. 24, and by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, declared to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to the period to which the Psalm refers, it can, I apprehend, only relate to one of two periods;—the first, the time of return from the Babylonish captivity; the other, a season yet future.

But it cannot refer to the former of these from the following reasons:—

1. The prophecy was written for "the generation to come,"* or the *latter* generation, the word used by Job when he predicts that "the Redeemer shall stand in the *latter* day upon the earth."†

* Ver. 18.

† Job xix.

2. It is stated that when Zion shall be thus built, "the Lord shall appear in his glory."* This was addressed to Jews, whose fathers had seen the glory of God fill the first temple. Zerubbabel was now erecting the second, but no glory of the Lord appeared.

3. "The Heathen," it is further stated,† through the Lord's mercy to Zion, should "fear him, and all the kings of the earth his glory." But nothing happening at the time we speak of at all comes up to the force of these expressions.

4. Again, the time at which this mercy to Zion is to occur is at a period "when the people (peoples) are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord."‡ But, at the building of the city and temple under Ezra, there was no such assembly of the Gentiles. The student of prophecy well knows that this "gathering" there is to be, but that it is during the times of Messiah,—according to that ancient oracle, "unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be;"§ for "before him shall be gathered all the nations."||

From the above reasons it is, we apprehend, clear that the passage does not refer to the return

* Ver. 16. † Ver. 15. ‡ Ver. 22.

§ Gen. xlix. || Matt. xxv.

from the Babylonish captivity and to events which then took place. It is, we doubt not, an error in the interpretation of Scripture to apply to that period the sorrows so largely denounced on the Jews, or to fix on the temporary prosperity which succeeded that event the fulfilment of those blessings which are so gloriously set forth as pertaining to them. The Babylonish captivity was in duration short, and, from circumstances, much mitigated. During that seventy years several Jews were high in favour at court, and a Jewish princess was exalted to the throne of the reigning monarch. Prodigious miracles by a merciful God were manifested on behalf of the captives, and "many of the people of the land became Jews." Surely, then, the bondage was not severe. And, as to the period of return after the captivity, nothing in Jewish history at all comes up to the glowing descriptions given in the prophets of the spiritual and temporal prosperity of that wonderful race. No; it is not to the seventy years spent by Judah "by the waters of Babylon," nor to the brief period of prosperity subsequently under the Maccabees enjoyed, that we are to look for the fulfilment of the sorrow and joy so largely expatiated on in the prophetic word. These, alternately, refer to present and to future times.

It is *now* that the predicted curses are, and have been long, resting upon the outcasts of Judah; and it is in the *future* that the promised blessings shall with equal certainty, and with as exact a literality, be fulfilled. For we know Him who hath said, "*As* I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down; *so* will I watch over them to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." And, "*Like as* I have brought all this great evil upon this people, *so* will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them."*

It is, therefore, to times subsequent to the coming of Messiah, and not to the Babylonish captivity and its termination, that the language of prophecy, in general, and that adopted for our text, in particular, refers. And thus having, it is hoped, satisfactorily cleared our way to our subject, we proceed at once to enter upon its discussion.

May our God graciously be present, and grant us the aid of his good Spirit, for Christ's sake!

I. THE PRESENT LOVE OF CHRISTIANS TO THE JEWS is the point on which we have first to dwell.

It was at the early part of the last century that this happy feeling first distinctly manifested itself, in the formation of the Callenberg Institution,

* Jer. xxxi. and xxxii.

so called after the name of its founder, Henry Callenberg, professor at Halle, in Saxony. The object of this good man was the conversion of Jews to Christianity by means of the press, by provision for proselytes and catechumens, and the appointment of students, as travelling missionaries, to labour among them. This Institution was suppressed by the Prussian Government, in 1792. In the same century, efforts were made by that most excellent people, the Moravians, on behalf of the Jews. Count Zinzendorf took great interest in them, and some Jews joined the Brethren's Church. The Count desired to keep alive amongst his people an interest on their behalf, and introduced the following prayer for their conversion into the Brethren's Liturgy:—"Deliver the ten tribes of Israel from their blindness, and make us acquainted with their sealed ones. Bring in the tribe of Judah in its time, and bless its first-fruits among us, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel be saved."

But the happiness of the most express favour manifested to Zion since, I presume, the times of the Apostles, belongs to our own age. Year after year marks a growing interest for God's ancient people. On the Continent there are formed, on their behalf, Societies at Berlin, Posen, Basle, Bremen, Amsterdam, &c. America

has also been awakened to this sacred cause. How remarkable, also, the establishment, at the instigation of the late King of Prussia, of the bishoprick of Jerusalem, where, said he, "different Protestant communities, forgetting their differences, conscious of their unity, might tender to each other, over the tomb of the Saviour, the hand of peace and concord." The Protestant church now building on Mount Zion, for the Jews, is another proof of Gentile love. The same was also seen in the before-named illustrious Sovereign giving one of the churches of his capital for the use of the Jews, in which to hear the Gospel. Whilst, if we turn our eyes towards home, we see Ireland, with all her difficulties, not unmindful of this noble cause. We see Scotland sending to Palestine a deputation to enquire into the state of the Jews, and following this up with further labours of love on their behalf. We see our Dissenting brethren, happily, at last stirring themselves in the same blessed cause. We hear everywhere of public attention called to the work by courses of sermons (these amongst the number) on the Jewish subject. Whilst, above all, the London Society has thirty stations in different parts of the world, and is spending some twenty-five thousand a year in endeavouring to send the

Gospel to the Jews. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

II. We may, now, further show how this GENTILE LOVE IS THE SIGNAL OF GOD'S RETURNING FAVOUR TOWARDS HIS ANCIENT PEOPLE. For see how, through it, He has brought, and is bringing, favour to them.

1. This He has done in temporal things, influencing the hearts of the men of this generation in their behalf in a wonderful manner. The Deputies of the Five Powers* in this stand prominent,

* "Entre les cinq Cabinets. Séance du 21 Novembre, 1818. Messieurs les S. S. de Russie ont communiqué l'imprimé ci-joint, relatif à une reforme dans la legislation civile et politique, en ce qui concerne la nation Juive. La conférence sans entrer absolument dans toutes les veres de l'auteur de cette pièce, a rendu justice à la tendance générale et au but louable de ses propositions. M. M., les S. S. d'Autriche et de Prusse se sont déclarés prêts à donner sur l'état de la question dans les deux monarchies tous les éclaircissemens qui pourraient servir à la solution d'un problème qui doit également occuper l'homme d'état, et l'ami de l'humanité.

" (Signé)

" METTERNICH.

HARDENBURGH.

" RICHLIEU.

BERNSTORFF.

" CASTLEREAGH.

NESSELRODE.

" WELLINGTON.

CAPODISTRIAS."

—*Passages from Letters by a Clergyman.* Wertheim.

though, indeed, in France, Napoleon had before set the example. In our own country, and in Germany, we have seen the condition of the Jews gradually ameliorated. The establishing a British Consul at Jerusalem was a remarkable sign of the times. Whilst the united and indignant remonstrance lately sent to the Porte by the several Cabinets of Europe, in consequence of the atrocities perpetrated on the Jews of Damascus, and other places, seems strikingly to mark that the time of Zion's tribulation is fast passing away. How wonderful is it that these Governments, each of which, in times past, have imbrued their hands in Jewish blood, should now, with one voice, exclaim against a repetition of these barbarities, and expressly declare that this thing shall not again be. Surely in this we recognise a signal of the Divine favour.

2. In spiritual things the hand of the Lord is equally manifest in his still beloved people. The present movement in the Jewish mind is most remarkable, especially as to the manner in which they are throwing off the Talmud, together with long-established prejudices. But this would be of little moment, were it not, to a considerable degree, accompanied with a willingness to receive the Gospel.

In 1844, Dr. M'Caul visited Poland, and he says, "The labours of the Society [London] for

so many years have produced a most happy change in the tone and feeling of the Jews towards Christianity. The missionary journeys this last summer were particularly successful. In every place, crowds of Jews assembled in the Missionary's lodgings to hear and dispute; and thousands of books and tracts were circulated."

Writing respecting Germany, the same devoted friend of Israel says, "Everything I saw and heard led me to believe that the days of Israel's visitation from on high has advanced far beyond the dawn. The Jewish mind is thoroughly aroused: all are striving after something, they know not what. In the great struggle many fall to infidelity; but many also find rest for their souls in the promises of the Gospel. The number seeking baptism is very great. Even in the number brought into the Christian Church there is much, very much, to encourage us; but the result does not end here. A great preparatory work is being accomplished. The way of the people is being prepared in obedience to the command, 'Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.'"*

The number of converts actually brought to

* The above, and some of the facts also here stated, are from Mr. Reynolds' "Lecture on the Efforts made for the Conversion of the Jews." 1845. Wertheim.

Christ is also most remarkable. Take a few examples. Forty years ago, it is asserted that there was but one converted Jewish preacher; but now, upwards of twenty believing Israelites are clergymen of our Church, and more than one hundred in Germany are preaching the Gospel of Christ. Many Christian Jews, men of great learning and talent, fill Professors' chairs on the Continent. A converted Jew we have seen in the Church of England exalted to the Episcopate; whilst thirty-nine of the missionary agents employed by the London Society, are of the house of Israel; many others also being engaged by other Societies.

3. The unprecedented character of the above manifestations shows in stronger relief the return of that Divine favour of which we speak.

“The ancient Church, after apostolic times, seems to have made no provision for preaching the Gospel to the Jews. Some few of the fathers wrote against them in languages which the Jews considered profane, and therefore did not read; but no systematic attempt was made by the Christian Church. Individuals were moved to seek the welfare of the Jews, and their attempts were blessed.”* But, generally

* Dr. M'Caul.

speaking, the most opprobrious epithets were applied to them, and a line of conduct pursued, such as was calculated to make their prejudices perpetual. Christians knew nothing of Hebrew; the New Testament had never been translated into that language; and from the time of St. Jerome to that of Raymund Martyn, a period of nearly eight hundred years, almost all the endeavours to learn from their own writings the real objections and difficulties of the Jews, were abandoned. Nor was this all. The Council of Elvira, and several succeeding Councils, forbade all familiar and friendly intercourse with the Jews, under pain of excommunication. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Hugo de Velles, Bishop of Lincoln, extended this decree still further; for they denounced the same punishment upon any one who should hold communication with the Jews, or even sell them provisions: and to crown all, a decree was made, forbidding them to enter any Christian Church! After a series of acts of cruelty, they were all banished from England; and in one day, October 9th, 1290, Edward I. drove more than 16,000 helpless Jews from his inhospitable shores. For 350 years none of that nation were permitted to dwell in our country. In the time of Crom-

well they returned ; but still few cared for their souls."*

But I need give no catalogue of the atrocities perpetrated from age to age on the Jews, by Christians, so called. Sufficient has been said to show the novel and unprecedented position in which Jews of the present day, as contrasted with their predecessors, are placed ; and hence to indicate, in the clearest manner, the probability that the time of the Divine indignation is drawing to a close. With delight we hail this new, and, we doubt not, certain token, that the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, is soon to come. Lord, build thou the walls of Jerusalem, and be thou to her a wall of fire round about !

III. Let us now take a view of SOME OF THE MORE ULTERIOR MERCIES OF WHICH THE PRESENT RETURN OF DIVINE FAVOUR IS THE EARNEST. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion."

It will, indeed, be a happiness to see the city rebuilt, and a marvellous sign of the times when Jewish hands again "raise up the desolations of many generations." To believers it will be marvellous. But, who does not see that such an event even now, much more in a few years hence, would, generally, occasion little surprise, as

* From Mr. Reynolds' Lecture, as above.

coming to pass in what is called the natural course of things. The restoration of the Jews has been spoken of in the various states of Europe, and been pressed upon their several Cabinets. It is, unquestionably, one of the most obvious means of helping to settle the Eastern question, which, as a Deputy of the French Chamber lately observed, is precipitating Europe into a new and unknown career. Palestine, Israel's own country, is a vacuum; and there, daily, are perpetrated crimes abhorrent to humanity. It invites the return of its ancient inhabitants, kept, as it has been, by God's providence for them; whilst the belligerent powers of Egypt and the Turk would thus be sundered, and by their contests no longer (apparently) endanger the peace of Europe. The return of the alone heritors of the soil of Palestine would convey to that now wretched land the blessings of liberty and civilization. Their intelligence, their industry, their wealth, is abundant. Whilst in regard to the land, one or two years of their sojourn in it would, by the Divine blessing, make that present "wilderness to blossom as the rose." For there lie in heaps, already squared to the use of the builder, the stones of multitudinous cities, rich in various marbles, and heaped with shattered column, capital, and frieze. There, with unex-

hausted riches to reward the toil of the husbandman, lies the glebe, waiting to be upturned by the plough. And there, on terraced hills, the traveller, in admiring the labours of former generations, sees prepared to the hand of the planter, ranges for the fig, the pomegranate, and the vine ; whilst with glad heart he repeats that rapturous word, " Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel : thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry : thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria : the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things."*

But we are anticipating our subject. Judah, for ought we know to the contrary, may be restored, and Jerusalem rebuilt in the manner above alluded to, whilst after troubles may again await them. But there are mercies in store to the *whole nation*—mercies greater than the former, and, we apprehend, to be brought about with miracles in a manner at least as marvellous as those which marked their original settlement in the land of promise : for it is written, " According to thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at their might ; they

* Jer. xxxi. 4, 5.

shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf."*

A few of these mercies, both temporal and spiritual, we will now enumerate.

1. Israel, even the whole nation, shall be restored from their present dispersion.

"The Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."†

On this passage it has been well observed, that it cannot refer to the return from Babylon; for it refers to a restoration from a *dispersion*, and not to a return from a *captivity*. The mention, also, of Israel coupled with Judah points to the same fact.

2. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel, dis-united since the time of Rehoboam, shall again be one.

To this the oracle by the mouth of Hosea testifies, "The children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint

* Mic. vii. See also Isa. xi. † Isa. xi.

themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land.”* Remarkable, also, is the word by Ezekiel, to the same effect. The prophet is commanded to take two sticks, or rather staves, rods of authority, or the sceptres of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah; and they “became one in his hand.” Upon which it follows, “Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the Heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.”†

3. The nation will be established, as in ancient days, under a Theocracy.

David, the beloved, even King Messiah, will be their ruler. “David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shep-

* Hos. i.

† Ezek. xxxvii.

herd.”* “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.”† “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”‡ To which also agrees the word of the angel, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”§ And Isaiah proclaims, in animated strains, “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”||

4. When thus under the reign of Messiah, they shall be established with unprecedented prosperity in their own land.

“And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of

* Ezek. xxxvii.

† Jer. xxiii.

‡ Isa. ix.

§ Luke i.

|| Isa. xxiv.

the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.”* “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”† “And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the Heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.”‡ “In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.”§

5. At that time the ascendancy of Israel will be paramount over the Gentiles.

Clear to this effect are the predictions of the

* Hos. ii. † Joel iii. ‡ Ezek. xxxiv. § Zech. iii.

prophets,—“ And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion : for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass : and thou shalt beat in pieces many people : and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.”* “ And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning : and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The Lord of hosts shall defend them ; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones ; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine ; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people : for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.”† “ And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. . . . For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. . . . And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,

* Micah iv.

† Zech. ix.

and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers. . . . Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." *

6. The same ascendancy shall also be exercised by Israel over the Gentiles in spiritual things.

Jerusalem will be the metropolitan city of the converted nations. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." † So also Jeremiah testifies,—“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.” ‡ Zechariah also declares, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth

* Isaiah lx., and lxi. † Isaiah ii. ‡ Jer. iii.

unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the Heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."* And Isaiah witnesses, "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."†

7. Lastly, they shall be a holy people to the Lord.

The whole nation shall then be brought under the power of the promised covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward

* Zech. xiv.

† Isaiah lxvi.

parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”* And the results of this covenant in them will be such as the following:—“It shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.”† “Thy people, also, shall be all righteous.”‡ “And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.”§ And Zechariah, also, speaking of these times, predicts, “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.”|| Then shall it be said, “Open ye the gates, that this righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in.”

Such are among the future mercies which await the chosen seed, when the Lord shall “open his eyes” upon them, and of which his present returning favour is, we believe, the earnest and the

* Jer. xxxi.

† Isaiah iv.

‡ Isaiah lx.

§ Isaiah lxii.

|| Zech. xiv.

pledge. Arise, O Lord, have mercy upon Zion. "Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." We beseech thee, "Let the Redeemer come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Even so, Lord, in our day, we beseech thee.

IV. THE BENEFITS WHICH ARE TO FLOW TO THE GENTILES THROUGH ISRAEL RESTORED TO THE DIVINE FAVOUR, is the only remaining point of our text which we have to notice. "So the Heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory."

The question is often asked, through what instrumentality the world is ultimately to be brought to the obedience of Christ? The usual answer given to this question is,—through means of missions, as now used. Ardently as I love the missionary cause, holy, necessary, and blessed, as I believe it to be, yet I esteem such a reply as arising from a very mistaken view of Scripture. The object of the present dispensation is to gather in a remnant to God. The Gospel, our Lord asserts, is to be preached "*for a witness* to all people, and then shall the end come." Agreeably to this, the Apostle James declares, "God did visit the Gentiles to *take out* of them a people for his name."* And thus it has ever been. The

* Acts xv.

preaching the Gospel through missions, and in other ways, has been doing, and is doing, its work, and a people by this instrumentality is gathered to the Lord, even "a remnant according to the election of grace." But what progress has the Gospel made in the world? Little, indeed; for if we compare the present with the apostolic times, there are, probably, not more believers now than there were then. And yet, it is near two thousand years since the Gospel was first preached! But Scripture, and after Scripture, experience, is, blessed be God! now showing us our error. That which is so apparent we are now beginning, though slowly and late in time, to be convinced of, namely, that "salvation is of the Jews"—salvation, not merely as witnessed in the death and sufferings of the adorable Jesus, but in all those glorious *effects* of that incipient salvation, as hereafter to be developed in "the restitution of all things." It was Jesus of Nazareth, of the seed of Abraham, that purchased our salvation. They were children of the same race, his apostles, who first to us Gentiles preached, and made known that salvation so purchased. And, we apprehend, that it is through the same nation that we are to look for the full communications of blessings yet promised to the Gentiles. The precise manner in which those blessings

are, through them, to be communicated, we do not, perhaps, know. But this, it appears, seems obvious from Scripture, that they shall be a channel of blessing to the peoples, and that they shall be the great means of calling the attention of the nations to their God.

1. They shall be a blessing to the nations.

"The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."* "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land."† Agreeably to which is the prediction of St. Paul, "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"‡

2. They shall be the means of drawing the attention of the nations to God.

"God be merciful unto *us*, and bless *us*; and cause his face to shine upon *us*. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all *nations*. . . . God shall bless *us*; and all the *ends of the earth* shall fear him."§ "He

* Micah v. † Isa. xix. ‡ Rom. xi. § Ps. lxxii.

hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the *ends of the earth* have seen the salvation of our God.”* And Isaiah thus testifies: “And their seed shall be known among the *Gentiles*, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.”† “And the *Gentiles* shall see thy righteousness, and all the kings thy glory.”‡ Ezekiel is also very distinct, and says,—“The *Heathen* shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. . . . Then the *Heathen*, that are left round about you, shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate. And the *Heathen* shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”§ Thus, also, the miraculous overthrow on the mountains of Israel, of the great anti-Jewish confederacy by pestilence, blood, rain, fire, and brimstone, will lead to the same result. “Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of *many nations*, and they shall know that I am the Lord. . . . And I will set my glory among the *heathen*, and

* Ps. xcvi.

† Isa. lxi.

‡ Isa. lxii.

§ Ezek. xxxvi. and xxxvii.

all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of *many nations*, then shall they know that I am the Lord their God."*

Thus clearly is it revealed, that Israel shall be a blessing to the nations; and thus, through the wonders with which the Lord will accompany their establishment in their own land, shall the attention of the Gentiles be drawn to Him. "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. So the Heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory."

IT NOW ONLY REMAINS that we should conclude our subject with some suitable remarks.

1. We observe, the believer has KNOWLEDGE in things pertaining to God's ancient people.

(a.) Their *peculiarity*, from the first commencement of the nation up to the present hour, has strongly arrested his attention. "The people shall dwell alone;" and so he finds it to be. "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar

* Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

people unto Himself;" and even thus it is. That patent of peculiarity has never been lost by them, and, as the instructed Christian well knows, never can be. He sees them peculiar in their origin, peculiar in their progress, peculiar in their ruin—a people always singular, always diverse from the nations—a miraculous power ever resting on them—alone in their pristine glory—alone in their present degradation—alone in that brilliant career which is shortly to open upon them.

(b.) Again, the believer has knowledge as to *the end which Jehovah has* always in view in the peculiarity of this people, namely, to witness for Him: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." And again, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." Continuous has been their "witness," and from generation to generation they have "shown forth the praise" of the Lord's sovereignty and his grace, of his severity and faithfulness, of his power and forbearance. In the events which have befallen them may be read, as in a book, the Divine character; for there is no attribute of Omnipotence which has not, to a degree, been "witnessed to" by them. And in their witness they have been a people wonderful hitherto, and will be even to the end.

(c.) The mind of thoughtful Christians is, also,

fully awake to the *present remarkable and peculiar page* in Jewish history. Forty years ago, he reads* that there was but one converted Jew preaching Christ. At this present time there may be nearly 200 of that nation engaged in spreading the Gospel!† Forty years ago, no man cared for their souls; but now, the London Society alone are spending no less than 25,000*l.* a-year in machinery to set before them, at home and abroad,—in England and on the Continent, in Syria, Persia, and Africa,—the way of salvation in Christ Jesus! As before noticed, the eyes of Europe and of civilization are turned towards them and their land; and the Lord hath “made those that led them away captive to pity them.”‡ From many a believing heart also,

* Lectures on the Jews. Glasgow, p. 434.

† See Reynolds's Lecture, p. 17.

‡ The following, from the “Jewish Intelligence” of December, 1845, is illustrative of the different state of feeling which prevailed a century and a-half ago, in regard to the Jews, to that which happily now obtains:—“There is a church in Vienna built in commemoration of the expulsion of the Jews in 1670, on the spot where the Jewish synagogue stood. The first stone of this edifice was laid by the Emperor Leopold with great solemnity, and a tablet erected with the following inscription:—‘In the presence of the Most Illustrious Roman Emperor, Leopold (here follow several names), and the Civic Council of Vienna, after

throughout the world, prayer is daily made for them, whilst, in their own minds, a marvellous revolution is taking place. They receive the New Testament, and they themselves reprint the Old, and daily there is "a shaking among the dry bones," portentous of returning animation to that deathful stillness which, in the charnel-house of obstruction, has, from generation to generation, rested on the blasted hopes and withered expectations of the house of Israel.

(d.) The believer, instructed in this portion of "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," is also aware, that *the return of "the people" to their own land is the next greatest event in the history of the world to be looked for.* Long was the period from the creation to the giving of the law. Protracted, again, was the time from that great event to the bringing in of Messiah. And how long has it not been from the coming of Messiah to the present period! But long ago,

the destruction of the Jews' Synagogue, this Church was consecrated and dedicated to the holy Margrave of Austria.' A large medal was enclosed in the foundation, with this inscription:—'The Most Illustrious Emperor, after having expelled the Jewish perfidy, and demolished the den of thieves, called a synagogue, which stood on the spot, cleansed it to be a temple of God, and consecrated it, according to Catholic rites, to St. Leopold.' "

the Lord has said, concerning his promised advent, "Behold, I come quickly." And this, we know, is "the last time." The chronological prophecies also, are, by any calculation, almost run out; and "the signs of the times" are strange and foreboding. It is written, "After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up; and we shall live in his sight." One "day" of Israel's history elapsed before Messiah appeared. He came; and now another long "day," of near two thousand years, has run out. Surely, "the third day," when they "shall live in his sight," cannot be far remote. "Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." But Gentile ascendancy is not to last for ever;—"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion." The believer knows this, and he sees that the event must be nigh, even at the doors; and that which his understanding clearly apprehends, his heart also fully embraces. With the prophet, he unites in supplication, "O, my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city, which is called by thy name."

Thus, touching the holy, and the ancient, and the wondrous people, the believer has knowledge.

2. Now, mark the Christian's DUTY in respect to them.

(a.) He feels constrained to *acknowledge his past neglect* and indifference to Zion. He sees and confesses that her sorrows have not moved him,—that he has turned a deaf ear to her sighs, and has had no sympathy with her groans. He is now surprised at finding that, whilst the attention of the Christian Church has been directed to the Heathen and their conversion, the Jew, and his being brought to Christ, has been forgotten. Here has been a signal error. The believer sees it, acknowledges his share in this reproach, and confesses his own past blindness and the blindness of the Christian Church.

(b.) Seeing, again, that large masses of Scripture are devoted, not only to the past, but also to the future, history of Israel, the instructed Christian sees that it is his plain duty *to acquaint himself with the page of unfulfilled prophecy* which belongs to them.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.” And as we draw near the times when any particular portion of that Scripture is to be fulfilled, it is, of course, important that we should acquaint ourselves with it, lest the events to which they point should take us by surprise. Now, it is evident, that “the time of

the end" is near. Hence, we should acquaint ourselves intimately with those events which are then to take place, and, amongst the rest, with those facts and details which belong to the restoration of Israel. It is our positive duty, and especially the duty of ministers, not to be ignorant of these things. What! shall we, who are "children of the day," find ourselves precipitated into a series of events, ignorant of their beginning, ignorant of their course, and ignorant of their close? That be far from us! "God is the Lord who showeth us light." Let us, then, use that light to his glory. The "sure Word of prophecy" speaks distinctly as to the future, and is "a light shining in a dark place." I beseech you, Christian, "search the Scriptures;" and, whilst events in rapid succession are hastening to the development of mysteries which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world, do you, instructed by the prophetic word, be preparing, and at all points ready, for the consummation.

(c.) Christians have, also, a duty to discharge towards the ancient people of God by daily *endeavouring to effect the conversion of individuals* of that race.

The success of missions to the Jews is fully equal to that of missions to the Gentiles; and

the command is to preach the Gospel to the Jew as well as to the Gentile. Hence, Christians gladly avail themselves of opportunities of communicating to the Jew that Gospel which is precious to their own souls; they zealously uphold missions to them, and both at home and abroad seek the conversion of "the remnant according to the election of grace" out of that people which God hath foreknown.

(d.) But, Christians do not stop here. They seek *the conversion of the whole nation to the Lord.*

Individuals of this race are now being converted to the Gospel by human agency. The whole nation, as a nation, will, we believe, be only brought in by the immediate power of God. Now for this great event it is the duty of believers to pray, both for the sake of that nation, and also of all others. For, as Archbishop Leighton well remarks, "They forget a main point of the Church's glory, who pray not daily for the conversion of the Jews." Even so. "The receiving of them shall be life from the dead," as we have before seen. Very importunate, therefore, is the Christian with the Lord in prayer, that he would be pleased to bring about this great event. Very ardent is his love to Zion, when he sees that

through her such matchless benefits shall from the Lord flow forth to the nations. Dear to him is her dust, and often he fondly thinks upon her stones; whilst from his heart the prayer ascends, "Wilt thou not at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

3. From duty, we pass to the PRIVILEGE of being helpers in benefits to Israel.

(a.) It is a great honour which the Lord has put upon us that *we live in an age* of the world when the hitherto despised and *neglected race are beginning to find favour* in the sight of the peoples.

Our fathers thought not of them. The time was not then come. But now, blessed be God, he has put it into our hearts to love Israel, and to see works done for them such as have not been witnessed since the destruction of their city and polity. This is a blessed privilege. It opens a new and living page of history, fraught with good to the Church, and hereafter to the world. Connected with this wondrous people, prophets and wise men have desired to see the things which we see, and have not seen them. In the world's previous history, age after age brought to Israel nought but shame, ignominy, contempt, and obloquy. But now, blessed be God, it is

not so. A brighter day is dawning on the doomed and hitherto wretched race; and it is our privilege to see and witness these things.

(b.) And, surely, it is *a token of good to that portion of Christ's visible Church to which we belong*, that so much of the love now shown to Israel is to be found in it.

True is that word, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee." And one way in which that blessing comes upon any Church which seeks the good of Israel is obvious; for the Jewish subject at once leads to the Scriptures, the fountain of light and blessing. The Word of God is searched in reference to them, and the Church is illuminated and benefited. Thus it is now with our own Church. The study of the Jewish subject leads to the further consideration of unfulfilled prophecy. This always has, as its end and object, THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; and as this grand doctrine is brought before the Church, so the hearts of believers are animated, and they are led more and more to watchfulness, and holiness of life. In this respect the interest taken by us in the Jews has given us an advantage over other Churches, and over our Dissenting brethren. Hitherto they have not espoused the cause of Israel, and, as a consequence, the study of the prophetic Word (as

once with us) is almost unknown among them. The allegorical and figurative interpretation of Scripture destroys amongst them (as still too much amongst ourselves) the marrow and the power, the truth and the literality, of the Scriptures of the prophets.

May all the Churches be led to the same blessed privileges to which, in the study of the prophetic Word, the Lord is directing us; and may we, through the Holy Ghost, abound more and more!

(c.) Another privilege connected with labours for Israel's welfare is, that in these we are *undertaking that which is well-pleasing to God*.

Despite all their untold sorrow, they are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes." God has given them a law which cannot be broken—a *national covenant*, which he cannot annul. "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off

all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." *

Clear and strong is this language, and indicative of the deep, the unchanging, the eternal love with which Jehovah loves the chosen nation. Happy we, then, if the same mind, and the same love, exists in our hearts towards them. Happy we, if in the use of means within our power, we are fellow-workers with God, and are found "taking up the stones," and preparing materials for that "highway" which the Lord himself will make for their return. Let the thought animate us, that in seeking Israel's welfare, we are doing that which is pleasing to God; and let us praise his holy name that he has put the honour and privilege upon us of seeking the peace of Israel.

AND THUS, in speaking to you of the believer's knowledge, duty, and privilege, respecting the things which pertain to Israel, I have brought to a close our delightful theme. I would that it had been handled with an elevation suited to its dignity, with an unction corresponding to its importance, with a copiousness agreeable to its vastness. But, who is sufficient for these things? The sublimest imagination cannot realize them;

* Jer. xxxi.

the most capacious heart cannot embrace them; the most eloquent tongue cannot describe them.

“ And here will I make an end. And could I have done well, and as is fitting, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that only which I could attain unto.” May, however, a blessing rest on the Word spoken; and may it, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be rendered effectual in promoting amongst the people of God a more lively interest in the welfare and prosperity of Israel! Even so, Lord, for Jesus' sake!

LECTURE IX.

THE REDEEMER'S RETURN THE DAWN OF ZION'S GLORY.

BY THE REV. W. W. PYM, A.M.,

VICAR OF WILLIAN, HERTS.

ISAIAH LIX. 20, 21; LX. 1—3.

- “ *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*
- “ *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise*

upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

"THE Redeemer's Return the Dawn of Zion's Glory," is the subject for our evening meditation, and it is one which cannot fail of interesting every Christian mind about me, inasmuch as it is connected with the future destinies of a people who have been wonderful from their beginning.

The simplest method of bringing it under consideration may be, to confine ourselves to the two following enquiries:—

I. *What has been Zion's past glory, and when did that glory depart?*

II. *What will be Zion's future glory, and when will that glory return?*

And if Paul, an inspired apostle, felt deeply his own weakness in his work, how much more may we! But, blessed be God, he hath provided a supply for our need, saying, that if we, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Oh, exalted Saviour, remember the word unto thy servants, upon which thou hast caused us to trust; and do thou, condescending Spirit, come

amongst us, and with great might succour us, and so impress every heart with the sense of thine actual presence, that we may feel it good to be here because thou art in this place, and make the word in thy servant's mouth profitable to all who hear it, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

Before we attempt to furnish a reply to our first enquiry, we must endeavour to ascertain what is intended by "Zion." By this I understand, either the holy mount, on which the temple and a part of the city were built; or that people whose metropolis was there before the kingdom was rent in twain; and the doctrine connected with our subject will be found, I think, to apply to either or both of these meanings.

I. *What has been Zion's past glory, and when did that glory depart?*

To the former part of this question we reply, that, *Zion's chief glory was, Personal Intercourse with God.*

That it was so may be proved in two ways;—first, *by the experience of Individuals*; and then, *by that of the Nation.*

It was seen in Abraham. In the history of this eminent person, what was his chief honour? *Was it found in his Calling from darkness to light?* Although the distinction was great, to be selected

single and alone out of a world lying in ignorance and sin, yet, I conceive, that this was by no means Abraham's chief honour. Indeed, there is no child of Abraham's faith who is not, in his measure and degree, made partaker of the like privilege. *Do we look for it in his Typical character?* This, I grant, was very remarkable, as it is unfolded by St. Paul, Rom. iv. 16, 17, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) like unto him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." In this passage Abraham, as the father of us all who believe, is likened to Christ, for, that he is spoken of as distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost, it is clear. He is described as God, who *quickeneth the dead*. How is he distinguished by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 45? "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a *quickeningspirit*." And this connects him with his character of the second Adam, and, therefore, as "the everlasting Father" of all believers. Now, I readily grant, that this was a

distinguishing feature in Abraham's character, yet not the greatest. *Was it found, then, in that God gave him the Covenants*, the one for the land, the other for the seed, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed? I conceive not. Neither do I think it belongs to that other distinction, *that to Abraham and his seed were the Promises made*, Gal. iii. 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." For though, *typically*, made first to him (for to Christ they had been *actually* made in eternity, Tit. i. 1, 2), they belong, in one sense, to every child of God. But Abraham's chief glory I believe to be this, because all those other particulars to which we have referred spring from it, *that he was called the Friend of God, and admitted to the consequent privileges of that ennobling friendship*. And surely, it is a wonderful reflection, that the God, who inhabiteth eternity as his native atmosphere, who has been from everlasting and will be to everlasting, should condescend to admit to friendly intercourse with himself the creature of yesterday, and to raise him to the level of a holy familiarity, on the terms of communion as a friend! Consistently with which he says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

I now turn to the case of Moses, and inquire, What was his chief glory?

Was it his Miraculous Preservation? Great, indeed, was the mercy thus vouchsafed to him, when, by the cruel decree of Pharaoh, the male children of the Israelites were commanded to be put to death; but, when we look at the history of every child of man in the helpless years of infancy, the preservation of such amidst surrounding perils is little less than a miracle.

Was it, again, his Adoption by Pharaoh's daughter? Here, I grant, was the opening of great worldly prospects before him, in one of the greatest nations at that time in the earth; but to this, we cannot attach so much importance, as to select it as the brightest feature in the history of this man of God.

Was it, then, the Faith of Moses which led him to renounce all this proffered greatness,—the possible crown of Egypt, as some have thought,—and to “esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?” Still we are not satisfied with this solution, and we, therefore, turn to another, which is, *that he was King in Jeshurun.*

We here find one, amongst many instances, of the truth of this saying, that God will consent to be no man's debtor; that, if any for conscience

towards God endure loss, He will assuredly make it good.

Had Moses refused a crown, and turned his back upon the treasures of Egypt, God would place another upon his head even in this world, and appoint him "king in Jeshurun." But why did he so style his people Israel? Because, while all the nations on every side were in darkness, as touching God and the things of God, to them he had revealed himself from the midst of the thick darkness, and given them eyes that they might see. But this distinction does not satisfy us.

I look now to *his Threefold Typical character*, in which respect he stands alone in the sacred history. We nowhere find, I think, another combination *in one person* of Prophet, Priest, and King, as we do in Moses. Melchizedec was priest of the Most High God, and king of Salem, but not prophet. That Moses was a King we have just now stated; that he was a Prophet all of us readily acknowledge; but, the question may be asked by some, Where do we learn that Moses was a Priest? David, in the Psalms, replies,—“Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.” (Psalm xcix. 6.) Though, in this respect, Moses was eminent indeed, yet he had a greater honour

resting upon him, and this God himself declares when he rebukes Miriam and Aaron for rebelling against him. Thus, Num. xii. 4—8, “And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

Here Jehovah replies to the question, and he shows, that, whilst he distinguished other holy men of God, by communicating with them in vision, or speaking to them in dreams, it was otherwise with Moses: with him God would treat on terms of a nearer intimacy: he would speak unto him “face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend;” *and in this, the Nearness of his permitted Communion, his principal glory was*

found. But we meet with a confirmation of our doctrine in the previous occurrences on Mount Sinai, as recorded, Exod. xxxiv. When Moses came down from the mount, after his second sojourn of forty days and forty nights, we learn, that his face shone with a visible glory, and "that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance." Whence did this arise? From his previous intercourse with God, from admission to the high privilege of seeing the glory of the Lord, so far as man could see it and live. Now this circumstance was not only an earnest of the future glory of the saints, but it taught the way by which that glory shall be communicated to them. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; *for we shall see him as he is.*" (1 John iii. 2.) Thus it will be, by seeing him as he is, that we shall be changed into the same glory.

We now direct attention to another individual, and that is the Apostle John.

It would seem, that St. John enjoyed a larger share of our Lord's natural affection than his

fellows, and hence is distinguished as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." We find him accordingly one of those three who were selected on special occasions, to be the chosen companions of their Lord. Thus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, he was present. Again, in the garden of Gethsemane, he was a witness of the first act of the tremendous tragedy, which at that time was performed, when, as our sin-bearer, that suffering Saviour bent like a bulrush beneath the weight of the sin of a world. And here we behold one of the strangest pictures which is exhibited in the word of God. Here we see him, who is the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Upholder of all things, reduced to such extremities of soul-suffering for our sins, that he turns in very weakness to the creatures of his hand for help, and calls upon them to watch with him. (Matt. xxvi. 40; Mark xiv. 37.) And what was the reception with which this request met from those to whom he made it? They all fell asleep, for their eyes were heavy! The depth of his humiliation, in that hour of darkness, is here pourtrayed, and the desolateness of his spirit fearfully set forth. But, on each of those occasions to which I have referred, John was not alone, Peter and James were associated with him. There is, however, one scene in which he

is distinguished beyond the rest, and that was at the last supper. What was the place which he then occupied? He lay on Jesus' bosom. I conceive this to have been more than an ordinary circumstance; that it was figurative of what should hereafter occur, and consistent also with that place which he occupied in his Lord's affection. What more common amongst ourselves than the expression, "a bosom friend?" And upon what terms do we live with such? We unfold to them the secrets of our heart. And, in perfect consistency, we find the conduct of our Lord in the present case, for when he had ascended on high, and was about to reveal to his Church the Divine purposes concerning it, from that time until the consummation, it was St. John that he chose, by whom to communicate this revelation of things to come. Thus, from an enquiry into the cases of these eminent individuals, Abraham, Moses, and the apostle John, we find our doctrine established, that *Personal Intercourse with God formed, in each case, their chief glory.*

Let us now turn from the instances of individuals to that of Israel, as a nation.

Here Moses decides the question, when enumerating the privileges of the people (Deut. iv. 7, 32—34). He lays the greatest stress upon

the Personal dealing of God with them. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"

But another circumstance tends to confirm our doctrine. What was the *first* subject of communication upon which God spake to Moses, when he "went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount forty days and forty nights?"

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; and let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." (Exod.

xxiv. 18; xxv. 1, 2, 8.) If God gave such prominence to the fact, *that he would dwell amongst the people*, surely it was one of prime importance, and must be so in our eyes. The same doctrine is taught by Solomon, at the dedication of the temple. "Will God indeed," he asks, "dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1 Kings viii. 27.)

But the greatest exhibition of this truth was reserved for the last, and was made when the voice of prophets had ceased, and Divine communication had become rare, and for a length of time there had been no more open vision: as if this pause, or cessation of intercourse, were ordained in order to contrast with it the event which was about to succeed, and so to wind up that dispensation of mercy to Zion. I refer to the Incarnation of Christ.

The glory thus put upon Zion was eminent. When God himself would leave the place of his habitation, and come forth to visit this quarter of his wide-spread dominion, what portion of our earth should be the place for the soles of his feet? Judea. When God would manifest himself in human form, and appear as a man

amongst men, what part of the family of man should be honoured by his choice? He took hold of the seed of Abraham. Thus the Lord, whom the faithful in Israel sought, should suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant in whom they delighted; and thus the glory of the latter house became actually greater than the glory of the former. So important was the event, that every step of this Royal progress had been marked out long before: his miraculous conception in Nazareth: his birth in Bethlehem: his flight into Egypt, and consequent return, when God called his Son out of Egypt (Hosea xi. 1): his baptism (John i. 33): his manifestation to Israel: his gracious words and gracious works; and, after all, his rejection by the people upon whom he conferred this honour: all and each had formed the burden of unfulfilled prophecy, until he came to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel."

The remainder of our question is yet unanswered.

2. *When did this glory depart?*

Whensoever the Lord *withdrew his presence* from the days of Eli, to the ascension of Christ. That, which occurred in the former case, is

strikingly illustrative of our doctrine; and to that, therefore, let our attention be turned. The particulars are as follow:—

“ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.” (1 Sam. iv. 12—18.)

Here observe, that when Eli heard that Israel had turned their backs before their enemies (Josh. vii, 8)—sad tidings to the heart of an Israelite indeed, who felt for the honour of his country,—nothing occurred. When, again, it was added, that his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain—and what could have wounded a father's heart more deeply, who feared God, than to know that the spirits of his children had passed into eternity, of whose salvation he had no hope?—nothing followed.

But when mention was made of the ark of God, that it was taken, he fell from off the seat backward, and his neck brake, and he died. And would we learn what overwhelmed this aged servant of the Lord in these last tidings which he heard, the dying words of the wife of Phinehas inform us. Having given birth prematurely to her child, “ she named him Ichabod, saying, *The glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God is taken.*” It was the symbol of his Presence, and the Glory of Zion. That which was true in this case, was true in every other which agrees with it, and which occurred between this and the last which we have named; and when the Lord had come to his own, and his own had received him not; and when, having finished the work which his Father had

given him to do, he turned his back upon the land and upon the people that had rejected him: a cloud received him out of their sight. Sad portent of what was about to follow upon that so highly-favoured and distinguished nation! Clouds and darkness have hung around their path from that time even to the present,—a darkness which shall not be dispersed until God remember them in mercy, and the time to favour Zion shall come.

II. *What will be Zion's future glory, and when will that return?*

By necessary consequence, from what has been argued, we arrive at the conclusion, that it must be *some returning Personal Intercourse with God*. And this may be proved in divers ways.

The prophet Jeremiah teaches this truth. Thus we read, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.”

Now, herein is a marvellous thing, that the days shall ever come in which the Egyptian deliverance shall be forgotten; that this, which

has been the national boast for ages and generations, shall be no more remembered ; that those events, in which God himself was the chief actor, and of which God himself has been the historian, and which has marked their history by a line of preternatural light, which forms, also, part and parcel of the imperishable records of the word of God, that a time shall arrive when this shall happen, and the people shall no longer speak concerning them.

But it must be so, and the reason is plain ; because the glory of the latter day deliverance shall so far exceed that of the former, as to eclipse it, that it shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But, what formed the principal glory of that deliverance ? Look through the catalogue of those great events, and fix upon one circumstance connected with Israel's departure from the house of bondage, which claims a just precedence. Was it the darkness that was felt, or the death of the firstborn, or that the ordinances of nature were set aside, and the waters of the Red Sea, which had kept their wonted channel since God had set them their bounds that they should not pass, unmindful of their creation law, stood up on a heap, and, forming a wall on the right hand and on the left, made a way for the ransomed to pass over ? It was in

none of these mighty works that we find the thing after which we are in search. But in this it is found,—*that the people were conducted by the Personal Presence of Jehovah in the fiery cloudy pillar*; and, of all the bright stars in this constellation of wonders, this was the brightest. That such was the mind of the lawgiver is clear, as may be seen, if we refer to one of the recorded transactions in the wilderness. When the congregation had sinned grievously, in the matter of the golden calf, Jehovah threatened that he would no longer lead them *in person*, but send a created angel to go before them, to take them up into their promised inheritance. What effect did this produce upon Moses? Was he satisfied with the terms thus proposed? Now, doubtless, it would confer a great honour upon any people, who were called to migrate from one country to another, were God to send an angel to be their visible leader and guide. But did Moses regard it in this light? No; for he utterly rejected the proposal, neither would he let the Lord go, until he had retracted the threatening, and consented to go up with the people to their promised rest. And in all this he acted right, for, although to have a created angel of light as the visible guide of their steps through the wilderness, would indeed confer an honour upon the

nation, it would confer no honour in that case, because God himself had undertaken to be their guide. It was, therefore, the Personal Presence of Jehovah which Moses judged to be their chief glory. How, we now ask, if this be true, can the latter day deliverance exceed the former in glory, if this, the chief glory of the former, be not found therein? From which our conclusion is unavoidable, *that Zion's future glory must be some returning Personal Intercourse with God.*

But the same conclusion is to be drawn from *Israel's recognition, and the honour to be put upon her in the dispensation of the fulness of the times.*

Oh, wondrous scene! which has yet to be unfolded before the eyes of creation, when God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him: towards which all the tributary streams of time, for six thousand years, have been flowing, bearing upon their bosom the multiplied affairs of men, and all to promote, in that day, the eternal purposes of God! But, Who will then be the grand object of admiration? Who the centre towards which every eye will be turned in that strange scene? Whose praise will then be echoed through the brilliant hosts of angels

and redeemed men, in that glad jubilee? The God-Man, Christ Jesus : King of kings and Lord of lords ! And will Israel then be forgotten ? Shall the seed of Abraham be overlooked by Him in that day ? The returning love of God for his ancient people will then break forth, and before that glorious assembly he will acknowledge them ; “ And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” (Hosea i. 10.)

But our doctrine receives further confirmation, when *we call to mind the place which Christ has chosen for himself in his coming kingdom.*

Upon this the Scriptures are full, and those Scriptures are clear. I shall simply confine myself to two. The first of these is that remarkable passage in Jer. iii. 17 : “ At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord ; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem : neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” And the context which is connected with it renders it still more striking : “ And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord : neither shall it come to

mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." (Jer. iii. 16.) And why shall "the ark of the covenant of the Lord not come into mind, nor be visited," in those days, in Jerusalem, but *because the Lord himself will be there*, instead of the symbol of his presence, for the city shall then be called, and for that reason, Jehovah Shammah, or, "The Lord is there." (Ezek. xlviii. 35.)

The other passage of which I speak, is that in Isaiah xxiv. 23, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

The one supports and confirms its fellow. Neither need we travel to heavenly places to explain away the simple meaning of "Mount Zion," or of "Jerusalem," in order to reconcile these terms with the Personal Presence of the Lord, for the Lord has expressly taught us, that in those days he will be there, even on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; therefore it must be so.

And when shall this glory return?

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning. Did we bear this fact in mind continually, we should not act so unbecomingly as

we too often do respecting him. We think and speak of God as though he were such an one as ourselves. We bring him to our own standard, and measure him with the measures of a man. Hence, we are too apt to look at his works under the like impressions as being rendered necessary by such or such unforeseen circumstances, and we believe that he provides only for events as they may happen to arise. Now this is altogether inconsistent with the true character of God, and of his dealings. Nothing can arise unlooked for by him: nothing for which he has not provided long before, yea, even "from the beginning." From the past eternity he has over-looked the future, and, as events come forth, they are only the unfolding of purposes which he has decreed. The very ordinances of nature proclaim this principle, and the instinctive actings of the lower creation repeat it. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming." (Jer. viii. 7.) And shall there be no appointed seasons for the mighty acts of the Lord as touching his people Israel? No fixed time for his return in glory to our world? It must be so, if we only argue aright from his ways and his works. It must be so, if we believe his word. The subject, upon

which one of our brethren has already addressed you in this place, confirms our reasoning, and Psalm cii. establishes it: "When the Lord shall build up Zion he will return in his glory." Now the converse of this is alike true. When the Lord shall return in his glory, he will build up Zion: from which our conclusion is irresistible, that *the Redeemer's return to earth is the dawn of Zion's glory.*

But is this subject only to be regarded as a speculative question, as one about which our understandings may be occupied, and a certain interest excited, and yet no practical profit to be drawn from it to ourselves? By a wondrous ordinance, the destinies of Zion are linked with those of the whole family of man, and from the days of Noah, when first this mysterious purpose was unfolded, it has been seen. Thus, when the spirit of prophecy came upon the patriarch, and he saw the vision of the Almighty, he proclaimed the mode of Divine dealing in communicating mercy to man;—"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge [and persuade] Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." (Gen. ix. 26, 27.) Thus they have alternated for a season. To the seed of Abraham the precedence was given, and for two thousand years from his call, or for fifteen

hundred from the transactions at Sinai, they occupied their own tents, and the light of God shone round about their habitation. But that light was withdrawn when the measure of their iniquity was full, and the Lord unchurched them. Then Japheth was called into their tents, and lo! for eighteen hundred years, as surrogate Israel, we have occupied the same. And strangely did God set forth, in a figure, his mystical dealings with his Church at large, when he transacted with his servant Gideon for Israel's deliverance! When that "mighty man of valour" required a sign at the Lord's hand, to confirm him in his mission against the enemies of his people, the Lord graciously granted his request; and the dews of heaven were concentrated in the fleece, "and it was dry upon all the earth beside." And, again, when he yet asked a further sign at the hand of the Lord, "it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." Strange symbol of God's dealings with men! For fifteen hundred years the dew of God's blessing fell about the habitations of Israel, and the surrounding nations were as a barren and dry land where no water is. At the close of the appointed season, God wrung out the dew from Israel, and scattered it over the nations of the earth; and lo! for eighteen hundred years

we Gentiles have been partakers of the benefit. But will he alway be guided by this rule? No. For, though the mercies of our God have alternated for a season, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile, they shall combine for eternity, when, according to the prophetic exhortation of Moses, of "Rejoice, ye nations, with his people," Israel shall be as life from the dead to the nations of the earth. "At that time they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and **THY GOD THY GLORY.**"

LECTURE X.

THE LAST CONFEDERACY OF GENTILES AGAINST ISRAEL.

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EZEKIEL XXXVIII 14—18.

“ Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the Heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog,

before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face."

It must be evident to all, at first sight, that the subject brought before us in these words has a special reference to the Jews, the ancient people of God; and while the contemplation of it must be interesting, and we trust not without its practical use, since it is contained in a portion of that Word which "*is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;*" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17;) yet we conceive that peculiar interest may be felt in it, from the fact, on the one hand, that the subject here brought before us is future; and, on the other, that though future, it may be very near; and still more, when we consider, that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the consummation of our hopes, the completeness of our salvation, the fulness of our

joy, are intimately connected with it. That the events here described are FUTURE, seems evident, amongst other reasons, from their being so essentially dissimilar to any previous history of the Lord's people. The result of all prior attacks upon Jerusalem has been very different; their enemies, on all former occasions, have always been victorious, and carried them off as captives; whereas here, whatever may be the temporary and partial success of this confederacy, it results in the overthrow, and destruction on the mountains of Israel, of their enemies, as it is distinctly stated in Ezek. xxxix. 3—5, "*And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.*"

But further, that the events here predicted may be very near at hand, I will only mention THREE reasons, out of many others, that might be adduced.

1st. The general interest that is now excited respecting the Jews seems to indicate that the

time, yea, the set time, is come, to favour Zion, for the people of God think upon her stones, and favour the dust thereof.* But the events here predicted are evidently PRIOR to the Lord's full manifestation of his favour to her. Therefore, if the one be near, the other must be nearer still.

2dly. The wasting of the Turkish empire, or the drying up of the Euphrates, as it is described in Rev. xvi. 12, "*that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared,*" (which is immediately to precede the events to which our text refers,) appears to be going on.

3dly. The drawing to a close of that period at the termination of which the prophet Daniel distinctly states, that "the sanctuary shall be cleansed," also indicates its near approach.†

But, once more, the subject before us may well call forth our interest as believers in Christ; since the great events for which we are looking,—namely, the second coming of the Lord,—the resurrection of the dead in Christ,—the change of living believers,—are in Scripture so closely connected with the return of the Jews to their own land. As, for instance, Isaiah xxv. 7—9,

* Ps. cii. 13, 14.

† Dan. viii. 13, 14, and Bickersteth's "Practical Guide," chap. vii.

“ And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

May the blessed Spirit of our adorable Redeemer be present with us, guiding us into all truth, revealing to us things to come, that our faith may be strengthened, our hope confirmed, our energies in his service stimulated, and our expectations raised, that thus his name may be glorified in us, and we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

In entering upon the consideration of the subject now before us, let us notice—

I. THE PERSON ADDRESSED.

II. THE STATE AND CONDITION OF ISRAEL AT THE TIME TO WHICH THIS ADDRESS REFERS.

III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ADDRESS ITSELF.

IV. THE RESULT OF THE CONFE-

DERACY HERE REFERRED TO, AND ITS FINAL ISSUE.

I. THE PERSON ADDRESSED.

The prophet is commissioned to speak unto Gog, who is described in the former part of the chapter as "*the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.*" I conceive (that although the expression may also include the description of a power), that some person is here intended; for the actions and the end of a person are here assigned to him. In verse 15, he is said to come out of the north; and in chapter xxxix. 3, 4, the Lord thus addresses him: "*I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee.*" And again, in the eleventh verse of chapter xxxix., it is said, in reference to this same person, "*there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude.*" It appears, then, that Gog is some person who is to be the head and leader of this confederacy against Israel of which our text speaks.

But, in considering who this person is, it may be well to mention some reasons why we conceive he is not the same individual as that Gog of whom we read in Rev. xx. 8.

1. Because this person, of whom our text

speaks, is to live and head this confederacy against the Jews, previous to their true conversion; as appears from the conclusion of chapter xxxix., where it is distinctly stated, in verse 22, "FROM THAT DAY" (evidently referring to the time of Gog's destruction), "*from THAT DAY and forward shall the house of Israel know that I am the Lord their God.*" Consequently, this confederacy must be BEFORE the Millennial period, at which time the Jews are to experience the fulfilment of that gracious covenant the terms of which run thus;—"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, *Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*" (Heb. viii. 10—12.) Therefore, the person addressed in the text must head the confederacy BEFORE the Millennial period, whereas the person predicted in Rev. xx., under the name of Gog, is to come up against the beloved city, at the END of that time, as we read in verses 7 and 8 of that chapter: "*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out*

to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

2. Again, the person here spoken of is to come up against the people of Israel, BEFORE, OR AT THE TIME of, the Lord's DESCENT TO THE EARTH. It is "*in that day*," (as the prophet Zechariah states it,) when all nations shall be gathered together against Jerusalem, that the Lord shall go forth and fight, and that his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.*

But, on the other hand, the assault against Jerusalem spoken of in Rev. xx., is not till AFTER Christ's PERSONAL REIGN ON THE EARTH FOR A THOUSAND YEARS, as we have seen by the passage to which we have already referred. (Rev. xx. 7, 8.)

3. Again, there is also a difference in the manner of their destruction ; the one in Revelations is spoken of as destroyed simply by fire ; (for thus we read)—"*And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city ; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*" (Rev. xx. 9.) Whereas other instrumentality is employed in the destruction of the army here

* Zech. xiv. 3, 4.

described. In the twenty-first verse of this chapter, the Lord says, "*I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.*" I conclude, therefore, that whatever similarity there may be between these two leaders, they are distinct and different persons.

Who, then, are we to understand by the person addressed in our text? There are many opinions on this subject, with which, probably, you are acquainted, and which, therefore, we need not stop to mention. On such a subject, indeed, it would seem that the most that anybody can prove at present, rises only to a probability, and falls short of any degree of certainty, as to who this person is. But still, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, some light may be thrown on this subject, for both the person and the confederacy here described, are elsewhere spoken of under different terms.

1. I conceive the Gog here addressed is the same person as that foretold by Daniel as the

“King that shall do according to his will.” The similarity in the description of the two is striking in these three points:—

(1.) As to the PLACE to which they are both to come; in Daniel xi. 41, 45, it is said, *“He shall enter into the glorious land,” “and he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.”* These expressions seem evidently to denote the mountains of Israel, to which Gog and his confederates are to come; as it is stated in Ezekiel xxxix. 2, *“And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel.”*

(2.) Then, again, they are both accompanied by the SAME ASSOCIATES; the Libyans and Ethiopians, as we see by comparing Ezekiel xxxviii. 5, and Daniel xi. 43.

(3.) Further, they are both said to come to their END IN A SIMILAR MANNER. Of the one, in Daniel it is said, On the glorious holy mountain he shall come to his end; and in Ezekiel, that he shall come upon the mountains of Israel, and there be smitten. (Dan. xi. 45; Ezek. xxxix. 4.)

2. Again, it seems probable that the person here addressed is the same with the Assyrian,

described in Isaiah x.; for though following his own devices, and expecting complete success, he is to be brought against the people dwelling in Zion, for their punishment, which being accomplished, he will THERE be destroyed by the Lord. If you look at the fifth and following verses of the tenth chapter, you will see the moving cause of this attack upon Israel. “O (or, as it is in the margin) *Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.*” And in verses 24, 25 of the same chapter, the Lord addresses his people in a way of warning and encouragement, with regard to this same event: “*Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.*”

The result of this attack upon Zion, we have

in chapter xiv. 24—27: “*The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*”

Now, the similarity between the Assyrian and the person described in our text, seems to be in the OBJECT for which he is brought against the people of Zion, namely, for their punishment; and also in the RESULT of his attack, namely, his destruction on the mountains of Israel, called here by the Lord, “*my mountains.*”

3. Again, it seems probable the person here described, and “*the man of sin,*” spoken of by the apostle in 2 Thess. ii. 8, are the same. Both are said to be destroyed by the Lord at his coming.

4. The same event of which our text speaks, seems also to be described in the third chapter of the prophet Joel, for the confederacy against

Jerusalem, which he there relates, takes place, as this does, at the RESTORATION of the Jews, and immediately previous to their conversion, as we read in verses 1 and 2, "*For, behold, in those days, and IN THAT TIME, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*" The conclusion of which is described in the fourteenth and following verses: "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope (or, as it is in the margin, the PLACE OF REPAIR, OR HARBOUR) of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy (or, holiness), and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.*" And again, verses 20 and 21, "*Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.*"

For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

5. Once more, I conceive that the assault against Jerusalem here referred to in our text, is the same as that described by St. John in Rev. xvi., the conclusion of which we have in chapter xix. The INSTRUMENTALITY by which they are led to engage in the war, is described as the same. In Ezekiel xxxviii. 10, it is said "to be an evil thought;" and in Rev. xvi. 14, they are said "to be gathered together by the spirit of devils." And the way in which the devil influences men's actions, is by exciting evil thoughts, as in the case of Judas and Ananias.

Again, there is much similarity between the two, in THE MANNER IN WHICH THE LORD FIGHTS FOR HIS PEOPLE. In both accounts he is said to send great hailstones on their enemies, and to terminate the conflict by his personal presence. In Ezekiel xxxviii. 18—20, we read, "*And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things*

that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." Also we are told in the parallel passage in Zechariah xiv. 3, "*The Lord shall go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*"

And we find the conclusion of the controversy spoken of in Revelation, thus described in chapter xix. 11—16: "*I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

And, also, they are followed by the same event,—the feast of the birds and beasts upon the carcasses of the slain, as in Rev. xix. 17, 18: “*I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*” And in Ezekiel xxxix. 17—20: “*Thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God.*”

The beast and the false prophet are engaged in this confederacy with the kings of the earth, and at the conclusion of it, the two former are taken, and cast ALIVE into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone. The rest, however, are to be killed by the sword, as we see in Rev. xix. 20—21: "*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast ALIVE into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*"

I conclude, then, that THE PERSON addressed in our text, is not the same as the one mentioned in Rev. xx. 8; but that he is the same with THE WILFUL KING mentioned by Daniel; with THE ASSYRIAN described by the prophet Isaiah; and with the MAN OF SIN spoken of by the apostle: and that this confederacy and attack upon Israel, are THE SAME with that described by the prophet Joel, and with the battle of Armageddon, predicted by St. John, in the sixteenth and nineteenth chapters of Revelation.

But before leaving this point, I will just

observe, that there seems a very general opinion that Gog denotes some Russian Prince. The Septuagint is thought to favour this idea; since it might be rendered the Prince of Rush (instead of the Chief Prince of Meshech), and Meshech and Tubal are supposed to correspond with the present titles that are used with reference to the reigning power in Russia, since he is designated the Prince of Rush, or Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk.

We must, however, now pass on to the second point which we proposed to consider.

II. THE STATE AND CONDITION OF ISRAEL AT THE TIME TO WHICH THIS PROPHECY REFERS.

1. They are restored to their own land, and are said to be dwelling there in peace and safety. This is spoken of in Ezekiel xxxviii. 8: "*After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.*"

Their state is also described in the eleventh verse, where they are said to be "AT REST," dwelling safely and without walls, and "*having*

neither bars nor gates," inhabiting "unwalled villages."

2. But though restored politically, and thus dwelling confidently, it appears they are not truly converted.

For, FIRST, in this state they still sin against their God, by disregarding him. Of this the Lord speaks in Ezekiel xxxix. 26: "*After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.*"

And, SECONDLY, it is not till the destruction of this confederate army, that the Lord's mercy is *manifested* to the whole house of Israel, and his Spirit poured out upon them, as appears from Ezekiel xxxix. 25—29: "*Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; THEN shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the*

heathen : but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them : for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

And also in Zech. xii. 9, 10, where the same confederacy as the one before us is evidently described, the Lord saith, "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*"

And, THIRDLY, that this restoration is prior to their conversion, seems also evident from this fact, that one purpose for which they are thus collected in their own land is, that they may there be punished. Thus we read in Ezekiel xxii. 17, and following verses: "*And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross : all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace ; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord*

God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you."

We now proceed to the consideration of the third point.

III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ADDRESS ITSELF.

"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee,

O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face."

Now, in this address there are FOUR POINTS which we will more particularly notice.

1. The declaration of the Lord respecting HIMSELF, in connexion with this confederacy. In the fifteenth verse we read,—the Lord addressing Gog and his confederates,—“*Thou SHALT come;*” in the sixteenth verse, “*I WILL bring thee against my land;*” which expressions, I conceive, are not to be understood in the way of precept and command, or in the least degree as sanctioning the transaction here referred to, so that those engaged in it will be at all exculpated from guilt thereby; but only as declaring WHAT GOD’S WILL OF PURPOSE WOULD PERMIT, AS THE MEANS, AND WHAT HIS WILL OF PURPOSE WOULD EFFECT, AS TO THE END; the END being the punishment of sinners, the MEANS used to accomplish this, the arms of sinners. As in the case of our Lord’s crucifixion; his death, and all the circumstances attendant upon it, were accom-

plished according to his will EFFECTIVELY ; but the actual instrumentality by which those purposes were fulfilled, was by his WILL OF PERMISSION ONLY. He neither commanded nor secretly influenced Judas to betray, or the Jews to crucify, the Lord. “ *For God cannot (as St. James says) be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man ; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*” He merely permitted them to carry out those suggestions which Satan had infused into their hearts ; and therefore, though Christ was dealt with according to the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God* ; yet the hands engaged in that transaction were *wicked hands*. As the apostle declares in Acts ii. 23, “ *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*” They fulfilled God’s purpose, not from any intention or design on their part to do his will, but “ *because (as the apostle asserts in Acts xiii. 27) they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*” So that the expressions here used are a revelation ONLY of what God PURPOSES TO PERMIT, and NOT OF WHAT HE COMMANDS to be done. Therefore,

those who will be engaged in this confederacy, though fulfilling God's will by afflicting his people Israel, yet being influenced by their own corrupt hearts, and stirred up by the evil spirit, will draw down upon themselves swift destruction, as the concluding part of this declaration clearly intimates: "*For, saith the Lord God, when Gog shall come up against the land of Israel, my fury shall come up in my face:*"* the result of which we have in the next chapter, namely, his destruction.

2. Another point which we have in this address is, the VAST MULTITUDE which will be engaged in this confederacy. They are described, in the fifteenth verse, as "*many people,*"—"a great company;" and, in the ninth verse, as "*a cloud to cover the land.*" The prophets Joel, Zephaniah, and Zechariah, speak of ALL NATIONS, as constituting this confederacy against Israel. And also, from the Book of Revelation, it clearly appears, that there will be a general union of ALL the Gentile powers against Israel at this time; for the KINGS OF THE EARTH and of the WHOLE WORLD are to be gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

3. But, again, another point in this address is THE TIME when this attack upon Jerusalem is to

* Ezek. xxxviii. 18.

take place. There are two expressions in our text which seem to mark the period; the ONE connecting it with the time of Israel's restoration,—“IN THAT DAY *when my people dwelleth safely*” “*then thou shalt come from thy place;*” the OTHER seeming to indicate that this day is the period that will immediately precede the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth,—“*It shall be*” (says the prophet) “*in the latter days.*” But it is at the LATTER DAY, as Job asserts, that the Redeemer will stand upon the earth. Now as his descent to the earth, and his standing upon the earth are after his saints have been caught up to meet him in the air; for, says the prophet Zechariah, IN THAT DAY when his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives “*the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee:*”* therefore I am inclined to think that the LATTER DAY spoken of in our text is *subsequent* to the GLORIOUS APPEARING of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And here it will be evident to all, that I suppose a distinction to exist between the GLORIOUS APPEARING of Christ and his ACTUAL DESCENT to the earth; and this I do, so far, at least, that I regard THE ONE as preparatory to,

* Zech. xiv. 4, 5.

and as the commencement of, **THE OTHER**. And it seems important to me that we should see this distinction between the two, as some period of time may elapse between them, and many events take place.

Now, though the period is commonly spoken of in Scripture in terms of a general character,—including, we conceive, both events,—there are passages where we find the distinction clearly marked. As, for instance, 2 Tim. iv. 1,—“*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at His* **APPEARING** *and His KINGDOM.*”

In Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, we have the event of the second coming described thus:—“*Immediately after the tribulation of those days,*” (viz., the dispersion and oppression of the Jews, which still continue,) “*shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall* **APPEAR** *THE SIGN of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man* **COMING** (not come) *in the clouds of heaven, with power and great* **GLORY.**” Now in this passage, the “**SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN,**” and “**THE SON OF MAN COMING,**” seem to

be one and the same thing, that is, the SIGN OF HIS COMING IS HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING.

And, further, there seems a marked difference between the state of the world at the TWO EVENTS. The day of the Lord, or his GLORIOUS APPEARING, commences, it would seem, at a time of PEACE and TRANQUILLITY; as we read in 1 Thess. v. 3,—“ *For when they shall say, PEACE and SAFETY; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*”

Moreover, it is when men are engaged and engrossed in the ordinary occupations of life; as our Lord declares in Matt. xxiv. 37, and following verses,—“ *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*”

Such passages as these seem to indicate a time of tranquillity and peace: whereas the Lord's descent to the earth is to take place in a time of WAR and TUMULT. For it is when ALL NATIONS ARE GATHERED AGAINST JERUSALEM

that His feet are to stand upon the Mount of Olives. (Zech. xiv. 2—5.)

It seems, then, that there is a distinction between these two events,—HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING, and HIS ACTUAL DESCENT UPON THE EARTH. And I am inclined to think that the RESTORATION of Israel, to which our text refers, takes place at the same time WITH THE FORMER, namely, THE LORD'S GLORIOUS APPEARING, with which also the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the change of the living saints, are so intimately connected.

And here I would mention a few reasons for this opinion, because, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the most prevalent idea is, THAT THIS RESTORATION takes place PRIOR to the Lord's appearing, and, consequently, before the resurrection and change of the living saints; which latter events are generally considered as happening in the MIDST of the attack upon the Jews foretold in the passage before us.

In mentioning, then, some few considerations which seem to me to favour the opposite idea; first, I would call to your recollection the historical narrative given by our blessed Lord of the principal events which were to happen to the Jews, and to His Church generally, between that period at which he spoke and HIS GLORIOUS

APPEARING. This account we have recorded in Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi., and Mark xiii. ; and, in the twenty-third verse of this last-mentioned chapter, we have this striking declaration ;—*“ Behold, I have foretold you ALL THINGS.”* But yet, in none of these accounts have we any mention of the Jews’ restoration PRIOR to the Lord’s coming in a cloud. But the gathering together of the elect (by which I understand the restoration of the Jews), and the change of the living saints, are spoken of as CONTEMPORARY events with His appearing ; as we see in Matt. xxiv. 30—41.

The same may be observed with regard to the historical account recorded by the prophet Daniel, in the eleventh and twelfth chapters ; in which there is no mention of Israel’s DELIVERANCE till Michael the great prince STANDS UP ; with which event the resurrection of the dead is also connected.

Now, though it may seem to be implied that there must have been a PREVIOUS restoration of the Jews, or else why should the wilful king come up into the Holy Land, as mentioned in the conclusion of the eleventh chapter ? Yet I conceive, that it must be evident that, from the fortieth to the forty-fifth verse of the eleventh chapter, the prophet is giving a GENERAL DESCRIP-

TION of the time of the end; and especially describes the confederacy AGAINST Israel, and its result as regards those engaged in it. Whereas, in the twelfth chapter, he speaks of THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME, but takes up the other side of the history, and records more particularly what will be happening to the Lord's people during that period. It cannot be a SUCCESSION OF EVENTS that he describes, because he mentions the WILFUL KING coming to his end BEFORE the great tribulation, and BEFORE Michael the great prince stands up; whereas, the tribulation is to be at the TIME of the end of this king, who is to be destroyed by the Lord, THE GREAT PRINCE, without human instrumentality, as we find from many places; for instance, in Daniel viii. 25,—
“*He shall stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.*” So that the STANDING UP of Michael the great Prince must BE PRIOR to the event recorded in the last verse of the preceding chapter; and, consequently, though a RESTORATION may be there implied, it is NOT TILL THE TIME OR SUBSEQUENT TO the standing up of this great Prince. Whether the expression in the first verse of the twelfth chapter, “*At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book,*” refers to the restoration of the Jews, or to

the translation of believers,—the remnant according to the election of grace, who may be alive upon the earth at that time,—appears to me doubtful; but I am inclined to think it has reference to the LATTER. However, be this as it may, it does not materially affect the point for which we contend, namely, that there is no mention of the RESTORATION of the Jews PRIOR to the Lord's glorious appearing, which event is spoken of in the twelfth chapter of Daniel, and former part of the first verse;—“*At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people.*”

2. But, again, we read in Luke xxi. 24, that “*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*” Now, at the accomplishment of THIS PERIOD, we have the description of the Lord's appearing, and the consternation and alarm excited thereby. The one seems IMMEDIATELY to succeed the other. But Jerusalem cannot be said to be TRODDEN DOWN of the Gentiles, when Israel is DWELLING there IN SAFETY AND CONFIDENCE, as declared by Ezekiel to be the case PRIOR to this confederacy against them. Therefore, also, we conclude, that AT THE TIME to which our text refers, Christ will have appeared.

3. Again, we are to bear in mind, that THIS

CONFEDERACY is spoken of as taking place at the SAME TIME as their RESTORATION. For it is said, “*In THAT DAY, when my people of Israel dwelleth safely thou shalt come up against my people of Israel.*” Therefore, if we can prove that this confederacy is AFTER the Lord’s glorious appearing; then it will necessarily follow, that the restoration to which our text refers must also be SUBSEQUENT to it. Now that THIS CONFEDERACY and the tribulation resulting therefrom, are AFTER the Lord’s glorious appearing, &c., &c., seems probable from His own words, Luke xxi. 36, where, evidently referring to THIS TRIBULATION, He clearly intimates that His people will not be involved in it; for He thus addresses them: “*Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*” And, again, we read in Joel iii. 16, (where we conceive the same controversy and tribulation are referred to), “*The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the HOPE of his people,*” (or, as it is in the margin, the PLACE OF REPAIR, OR HARBOUR, clearly intimating their EXEMPTION and SECURITY,) “*and the strength of the children of Israel.*”

If, then, the believing people of God are to **ESCAPE ALL THIS TRIBULATION** (which seems to be almost concurrent with the restoration of the Jews referred to in our text), **THEIR TRANSLATION** must have taken place **PRIOR** to it. But their translation takes place **WHEN** the Lord appears in glory, and, therefore, **THIS EVENT** must also have taken place.

4. Again, these events to which our text refers, appear to be the same as are to take place under the **THIRD** woe spoken of in Revelations xi. But at the end of the **SECOND** woe, and, it would seem, **BEFORE** the commencement of the **THIRD** woe, the proclamation goes forth, that **THE TIME** of the dead is come that they should be judged, and that the Lord should give rewards unto His servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear His name, small and great; and should destroy them that destroy the earth. So that the **APPEARING** of Christ takes place at the **END** of the **SECOND** woe; and the time of vengeance, to which our text refers, is under **THE THIRD** woe; therefore, also, Christ's glorious appearing must have taken place. (Rev. xi. 14—18.)

5. Again, the transactions related in our text are, I believe, generally considered as transpiring

under the pouring out of the SEVENTH vial. Now, under the SIXTH vial, this declaration is made (Rev. xvi. 15), "*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*" But, at the COMMENCEMENT of the SEVENTH vial, we have the declaration from the throne, "*It is done,*"—that is, the Lord is come, and His waiting people have received their blessedness. The controversy related in Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. immediately commences as described in the end of Rev. xvi.; the events connected with the termination of which we have stated, in Rev. xix. 11—21, "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the*

fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. THESE BOTH were CAST ALIVE into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

6. Another argument arises here in favour of the view I have ventured to state. The beast and the false prophet are said to be taken, and

CAST ALIVE into a lake of fire burning with brimstone: whereas, the remnant are said to be SLAIN WITH THE SWORD. The beast and the false prophet must, then, have been clad with IMMORTAL BODIES.

Now, if by the beast and the false prophet are meant, as I am inclined to think is the case, the great leaders of every age in opposition to Christ and his cause (the former consisting of secular leaders, the latter of Antichristian ecclesiastical leaders, namely, those of the Roman apostasy), then these must have been RAISED from the dead PRIOR to the battle, and, consequently, clothed with immortality; and this accounts for it being said, that they are to be cast ALIVE into the lake of fire.

That some of the wicked will be raised immediately after the resurrection of the just, I cannot now stop to prove: the subject is clearly stated by many writers on prophecy.* Suffice it now to refer you to the well known verse in Daniel xii. 2, "*Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*"

If, then, the idea I have already stated about the BODY of the beast and the false prophet be

* See Begg, on Prophecy, page 196.

correct, they must have experienced a resurrection, PRIOR to this time; consequently the dead in Christ MUST HAVE ARISEN, and his believing people have been changed; for though some of the wicked may arise at the TIME of the Lord's glorious appearing, yet the saints are to arise FIRST.

This, then, is another reason why I conclude that THIS CONFEDERACY will take place AFTER the glorious appearing of Christ; and that there will be some peculiar manifestation of His presence during the whole period to which our text refers. This seems clearly intimated in the twentieth verse, where it is said, "*they shall shake at MY PRESENCE,*" evidently alluding to a time PRIOR to His DESCENT TO THE EARTH.

I have dwelt thus much on the PERIOD to which I conceive our text bears reference, because, of all points connected with this subject, it seems to be the most important for our PRACTICAL USE; that we may daily live like unto servants waiting for the coming of their Lord; looking, not for some great events which we suppose may transpire BEFORE His appearing, but for that blessed hope which in Scripture is ever set before us, as the object on which our faith should fix; knowing, that "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry;" and that

His glorious appearing may take place ANY DAY, and that then they who are ready, will enter in with Him to the marriage, and the door will be shut. Surely, this subject is calculated to enforce our blessed Lord's exhortation with regard to this very point: "*WATCH YE, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.*"

4. But there is one other point in the address itself, to which we must now turn, namely, the Lord's DESIGN in this transaction.

(1.) The text declares it to be "*that the heathen (that is, Gentiles) may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.*" And what especially will they learn in this transaction? First, that He is a God of INFINITE PURITY AND HOLINESS, who cannot look upon sin without displeasure; for they will then see that it was because of the sins and transgressions of Israel, that He had hid His face from them, and caused them to go into captivity. (Ez. xxxix. 23.) They will also learn, that He is a God of UNCHANGEABLE LOVE; since, notwithstanding His people had sinned against Him, and justly merited eternal separation from Him, yet that He never

casts off His people whom He foreknew, but though *“in a little wrath He hid His face from them for a moment; with everlasting kindness He has mercy upon them.”* *“For this (saith the Lord) is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”* (Isaiah liv. 8—10.) How will this glorious attribute of JEHOVAH shine forth, when all Israel shall be saved, and shall enjoy for ever the fulness of these covenant blessings which have been promised to them, by a covenant-keeping God.

Again, the heathen will know Him as a God of INFINITE POWER, when His hand is stretched out to defend His people from their enemies. They will see that all the united strength of man is nothing against God; and that though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished—that He is God who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and amidst the inhabitants of the earth, and that He will work, and none can let Him. For thus He says, *“I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many*

nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. xxxviii. 23.)

(2.) But, further, the Lord's design, as regards His people Israel, is both JUDGMENT and MERCY. JUDGMENT, as we see from Ezek. xxii. 17—22, a passage to which we have already referred.

But this will be with a view to their PURIFICATION, and COMPLETE RESTORATION TO HIS FAVOUR; as declared by Zechariah in the thirteenth chapter and ninth verse, "*I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name, and I will hear them.*" "*So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more.*"* "*So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.*"† "*Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.*"‡

Such are some of the declarations, concerning

* Ezek. xxxix. 7.

† Ezek. xxxix. 22.

‡ Ezek. xxxix. 28, 29.

the gracious purposes which God designs in the mysterious and wondrous event, brought before us in this passage of His word.

But we must now pass on to the last point which we proposed to consider.

IV. THE EFFECT AND FINAL ISSUE OF THIS CONFEDERACY.

As to its EFFECT, we find from the prophet Zechariah, that it will be attended with PARTIAL SUCCESS, as we read in chap. xiv. 2, "*I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*"

Just at this extremity, it appears that the Lord will come with all His saints, and go forth and fight against these nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives,*"* and He shall defend Jerusalem, and seek to destroy all the nations that come against her,† and the slain of the Lord shall be many.‡ The Lord will arise in His jealousy, and in His wrath, and will call for a sword against them throughout all the mountains of Israel, and every man's sword shall

* Zech. xiv. 4.

† Zech. xii. 8, 9.

‡ Isai. lxvi. 16.

be against his brother.* The battle will be the Lord's, for though many of the Jews will suffer much, it does not appear they will fight on this occasion; but the Lord will fight for them, as it is said in Hosea i. 7, "*I will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.*" And such will be the multitude slain, of those engaged in this confederacy, that though every feathered fowl, and every beast of the field be assembled to eat their flesh, and drink their blood, the house of Israel will be engaged seven months in burying them. (Ezek. xxxix. 11—15.)

And during the time that the Lord is fighting for his people at Jerusalem, judgments will be poured out upon the rest of the inhabitants of the world; as we find from Ezek. xxxix. 6, "*I will send a fire upon Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles; and they shall know that I am the Lord.*"

By these judgments, then, it would seem that all those left in the earth, will be brought to a knowledge of the Lord, and the spirit of grace and supplication, being poured upon the house of Israel, they will look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him. And thus the FINAL ISSUE will be the CONVERSION of Israel—

* Ezek. xxxviii. 19—22.

the CONVICTION, if not conversion of the Gentile nations, and the establishment of that kingdom, which the God of heaven shall set up; which shall never be destroyed, over which Christ shall reign. Then will be fulfilled that which is spoken of in Rev. xi. 15, "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.*" He shall not ONLY reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously, but in THAT DAY He shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one.* And all His saints who have been raised and changed at His glorious appearing, having followed Him as described in Rev. xix. 14, under the expression of "*the armies of heaven,*" shall live and reign with Him on the earth for a thousand years.

But, in conclusion, I will address a word of WARNING and DIRECTION.

First, my brethren, do not the solemn realities which we have this evening glanced at, force upon us the important inquiry, "*Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?*"† An orthodox profession of religion may carry you well enough through life, and raise you high in the estimation of your fellow-men; but you will need something more

* Isa. xxiv. 23; Zech. xiv. 9. † Mal. iii. 2.

than profession and morality, that you may not be ashamed before the Lord at his coming. "*Many* (declares our Lord) *will say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*"* "*Examine yourselves* (then, brethren) *whether ye be in the faith.*"†

If there be one here present whose conscience testifies to him that he has never fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the Gospel; let him not delay another moment, but make haste and flee this very night from the wrath to come. Now, "*the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"‡ "*To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*"§

But, lastly, one word of DIRECTION. My Christian brethren, rest not with an UNCERTAIN expectation of happiness hereafter. As ye are led to contemplate future realities, seek to possess and maintain that blessed assurance, of which St. John speaks when he says, "*It doth not yet*

* Matt. vii. 22, 23.

† 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

‡ Rev. xxii. 17.

§ Heb. iv. 7.

*appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** It is THIS HOPE, this “GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE,” that will support you under trials, sanctify you amidst temptations, elevate you above the world, and give energy to your exertions in the work of the Lord. Give diligence, then, to make your calling and election sure, that so, like the apostle St. Paul, it may be your blessed privilege to look forward through the unknown future, and in the confidence of humble faith to say, “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.” (2 Tim. iv. 18.)

* 1 John iii. 2.

LECTURE XI.

THE VISION OF CHRIST TO THE MOURNERS IN ISRAEL.

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ZECHARIAH XII. 9, 10.

“ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

It is a matter worthy of our thanksgiving that

the subject of unfulfilled prophecy is exciting increased attention in the metropolis.

A Course of Lectures has been delivered on every Wednesday and Friday in Lent, at the west-end of London, and, had we not continued our practice of delivering lectures in this church, another minister was prepared to have summoned his brethren to his assistance, and raised the cry to his fellow-sinners, that the Lord is at hand.

Many of the brethren who have already addressed you have reminded their hearers of the prominence which the Jews are now assuming in the thoughts of statesmen, both in England and on the Continent, as an evidence that the time for the Lord's favouring Zion is near at hand. I pray God it may be so! It is well that we should act upon the scriptural direction, to give the Lord no peace till he make Jerusalem a praise upon earth.

Still, it must be confessed, that all objection to the study of this important subject, and to the examination of the meaning of the many prophecies of Scripture yet unfulfilled, has not ceased. It is met by ridicule; it is opposed by argument. But the more I have been brought into collision with such objectors, the more certain have I become that they have very

little considered the subject themselves. They are aware that many crude speculations have been dogmatically laid down by some, that events have disproved the erroneous views which have been entertained by others; and then, by some very illogical process, they conclude that nothing can be known by students which is not known by themselves who have never studied at all. Is this fair? Is it not the conduct of those who, living at the tropics, would not believe in the existence of ice?

Those who would treat the whole question as a matter for ridicule are not listening to me now, and will not read afterwards any defence of the study of prophecy. I need not, therefore, address myself to such. They are manifestly jesting with the Word of God. They are characters for our prayerful remembrance in private rather than for any argumentative address in public.

Those who would argue the matter, deny the possibility of our comprehending the subject, and found their assertion upon the text, that "secret things belong unto the Lord." Surely such parties greatly mistake the meaning of that text. All Scripture is a revelation from God, though all God's purposes to individuals are not revealed. Undoubtedly, there is a vast difference between stating what God's Word

declares upon the subject of Israel as a nation and asserting what God will, in his inscrutable wisdom, do with this or that individual Israelite.

But we are told that we cannot hasten the fulfilment of prophecy by our study, and that, when fulfilled, events will be so clear that they will proclaim the fulfilment at once. This is most inconclusive reasoning. Unless we are fully acquainted with the Word, we cannot tell how far events will agree with that Word. A watchmaker may know that for every set of works in his shop there is a case, but he must either know beforehand all the cases, that he may at once adapt the particular set of works to its right case, or he must subsequently fit and test one after another till he succeeds in his object. Just so is it with the students of unfulfilled prophecy. They endeavour to become acquainted with the prophetic word, that they may discern the signs of the times, and when great events come to pass, such as the French Revolution, or the dwindling away of the Turkish empire, they test them by the Word, and see if they bear the relation to each other which might be expected.

It is not the case that exact fulfilment of prophecy cannot fail to carry conviction to the minds of the ignorant or the prejudiced ;—the

unconverted Jew is himself a living testimony to the contrary. We Gentiles, or, I may say, we professing Christians, see the exact adaptation of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to the sufferings of our blessed Lord. We consider that that prophecy is so exactly fulfilled in the death of Christ, that he that runs may read it. But ask the unconverted Jew, and he will tell you that he can see no such exact fulfilment, and that he does not look upon Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Let us bear this in mind;—"the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." All prophecy, directly or indirectly, bears upon the Redeemer. Of course I except those particular prophecies which have reference to peculiar places or persons; I mean to assert, that the subject of unfulfilled prophecy generally bears upon the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He himself has bid us "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of him:" and I confess, if I am to study the Bible at all, I can discover no right given to me for rejecting all that is prophetic, while I study all that is historical: but I do find, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and I do find, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime

were written for our learning;" and while I can discover no special promise given to the study of the historical portion of the Bible, I do read, with regard to the Book of Revelation, that "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

Having said thus much, both as an apology for the study of the subject, and as a reason for year after year presenting the matter in a detailed form before you, I will proceed to the text which I have undertaken to expound this evening.

May the Holy Spirit of God guide us into all truth this night, for Jesus Christ's sake!

The subject which I am specially to bring under your notice is, "THE VISION OF CHRIST TO THE MOURNERS OF ISRAEL." It is somewhat difficult, at the close of a course such as the present, each subject being more or less connected with the others, to bring forward new matter; and prepared, as each preacher must be, without knowing what others may intend to say, it is almost impossible to prevent repetition. Still we have scriptural authority for wishing every word to be confirmed "by the mouth of two or three witnesses." Therefore, without dwelling upon the past history of God's ancient people, their calling, their unbelief, or their

temporary rejection, I will only remark, that we must expect and look for their restoration to their own land and to favour with God, and to their becoming the first of nations, the great means of blessing to the world at large, with the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilling the title prophetically, though ignorantly, given to him, by Pilate of old, The King of the Jews.

We are not, however, to consider that this restoration is to be gradual and imperceptible—we are not to expect that this people, now “scattered and peeled” as they are, should become a great nation, to be looked up to and respected of man, and manifestly honoured of God, without a most violent opposition on the part of Satan and his allied forces. The time will come when “many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zech. viii. 22, 23.)

But we must inquire,

I. WHAT WILL PRECEDE THIS BLESSED CONSUMMATION.

II. WHAT WILL MORE IMMEDIATELY INTRODUCE IT. And, *

III. BY WHAT IT WILL BE ESPECIALLY FOLLOWED.

I. WHAT WILL PRECEDE THIS BLESSED CONSUMMATION.

I would just observe, at the commencement, that *great tribulation awaits God's ancient people*. Their present state is indeed painful to every one of that remarkable people who reflects upon the glory which once belonged to Zion. Now they are "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," (Hos. iii. 4,) but more active tribulation awaits them yet. If you refer to Dan. xi. 45, you will read that *some great power*, (I stay not to question what power,) "shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince for the children of thy people, and there shall be *a time of trouble* such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." The prophet Jeremiah also pointedly alludes to this period, (xxx. 7,) saying, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble."

Nor are we left without testimony to this par

of my subject in the New Testament. It is delightful and cheering and encouraging to be assured that God's people, Jew and Gentile alike, as being one in Christ, will undoubtedly be preserved in the midst of all tribulation, "the Lord covering them in the shadow of his hand." But this does not alter a fact already proved in the course of these lectures, that the special object of our Lord's ministry was to the Jews. I cannot but conclude, therefore, the tribulation mentioned in Luke xxi. has special reference to this same people. Our Lord had been teaching them that "Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It was naturally to be expected he would then, as in most of the other prophecies with reference to Israel, follow up a narrative of coming judgments by promises of coming mercies. Our Lord accordingly continues to dilate upon this same topic, that at the time of the end, "there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory, and when

these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

The last portion of the passage quoted from our Lord's prophecy, will have already reminded you that *out of this tribulation Jerusalem shall be delivered*. The prophet Joel teaches us that this has always been the plan of the sovereign will of our God. (Ch. iii. 1, 2.) "Behold, in those days, and in that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehosaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land." So, again, Jeremiah (xxx. 7.) when he speaks of Jacob's trouble, adds, "but he shall be saved out of it." This is, indeed, just what we are led to expect from a knowledge of our God, who is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. For why did the Lord choose the Jew to be "a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth?" He tells us himself, in the last book of Moses, Deut. vii. 7, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you,

and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen from the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt: know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." In one word, the sovereign will of God chose them—the sovereign will of God has kept them a distinct and peculiar people hitherto, and undoubtedly the sovereign will of God will again gather them out of all lands, and restore them and deliver them from all their enemies, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." With God "there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning."

It is, my brethren, upon *the faithfulness of God alone* that we can build our interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy; it is upon the faithfulness of God alone that you and I can ourselves have any well-founded hope of eternal life. If we are real Christians, circumcised in heart, and born again of the Holy Ghost, we must know something of the vast distance between the holiness of God's law, which is exceeding broad, and the holiness of our practice, which always comes short of the glory of God. What then can give us that holy

boldness, that assured confidence which becomes a child of God? Did we merit our original calling? God forbid the thought! Have we continued to walk closely with God, never halting? never letting a thought run wild? Alas! the *worst* amongst us must say, and the *best* amongst us must say alike, "God be merciful to me a sinner." But, blessed be God! his faithfulness stands forward as the encouraging attribute to the converted man, and the Christian says, "Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Rom. viii. 39.)

In the same spirit the sons of Jacob may exclaim, My God, the God of my fathers, has promised that he will give me the land. Not one thing has failed me hitherto of what Jehovah has said, nor shall anything be wanting to the promise of God; for it is Jehovah who has spoken, "who is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent."

By whom this tribulation shall be caused, must, I suspect, be left as a matter of conjecture, until such time as events shall prove who is actually Gog. The prophecies which refer to Gog in Ezekiel xxxviii., xxxix., are clearly at this time unfulfilled. The generality of interpreters refer this invasion of the Holy Land to the political views of some northern power,

perhaps Russia. I will not, however, canvass this point: but I will proceed to remark, that Jerusalem shall not only escape from tribulation, but shall also *triumph over her enemies*.

For the proof of this, I must refer to Isa. lxvi. 13—20: “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the

isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." From which words I argue, that not only will the enemy who offers violence be crushed, but the Gentiles, who have been ignorant, not only of Christ and his Gospel, but of the honour and respect due to the Jews, will assist them, and will feel that they must assist them, in their return to their land. Perhaps the words in Zech. xii. 2, 3, more distinctly prove the same point: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." Again, we are told by the mouth of Ezekiel (xxxix. 10), that "they shall spoil

those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God."

Rest assured, my brethren, that if we cannot neglect this people with impunity, we cannot injure one Jew without bringing down upon ourselves the curse of God. Cursed will every one be that curseth them; but blessed will he be that blesses the Jew. See, then, the misery which awaits some who, with the Scriptures before them, blindly rush upon their own destruction, in opposing the ancient people of God. This is fighting against the Jew: it is more, it is fighting against Omnipotence.

The infidel may sneer; the thoughtless may laugh; the mere politician may deny that God interferes. He may look to the arm of man; he may speak of the chances of war; he may trust to the skill of generals, or the wisdom of diplomats: but let man do what he will, think what he will, plan what he will, "the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." "Let God be true, and every man a liar." Yes, brethren, the Lord may give up his people, or, as Micah says (chap. v.), he will give them up, but it is only for a season; "he will give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of

Israel." And mark the position the Lord Jesus Christ shall then occupy (Micah v. 4); observe that he that was born in Bethlehem shall then be ruler. In his strength shall the people stand, a terror to their enemies, as a lion among the flocks of sheep: while vengeance and fury unparalleled shall be poured out upon the heathen. "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks

of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." (Micah v. 4—15.)

Such, then, are some of the events which will precede the great consummation alluded to in the text, namely, "THE VISION OF CHRIST TO THE MOURNERS OF ISRAEL."

1st. A great tribulation, which, although it may be termed *general*, as you may infer from Ezek. xxxix. 6, seems specially to await this most remarkable and distinguished people.

2d. Out of this tribulation Jerusalem will be delivered, yea, more than delivered,—Jerusalem will openly triumph over her enemies.

II. I was, in the next place, to inquire WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL MORE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDE IT?

The event which seems specially to demand attention, from its connexion with this triumph is, THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS. But, in handling this point, there is much difficulty. It appears that unbelief and the dispersion of the Jews, stood to each other in the relationship of cause and effect. Thus St. Paul tells us,—“*because of unbelief they were broken off.*” We might, therefore, very naturally argue that conversion and restoration to favour, and to their own land, would also be in the same relationship to each other of cause and effect.

Perhaps the true way of meeting this difficulty is, to look for that which I may term a *double restoration*; by which expression I mean, a *partial*, followed by a *complete*, restoration. But what saith the Scripture? Let me refer you first to Isaiah lix. 20: “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.” Compare with this Jer. iii. 14: “I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring

you to Zion.” Now, from these two quotations, I collect that there will be a partial restoration of a few Jews to Jerusalem, previous to the general restoration of the nation; perhaps enough to constitute a political State: and if you will read Zech. xiv. 2, where the prophet informs us that half of the city shall go into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city; I think we may infer that this partial restoration will consist of Jews *converted* and *unconverted*. This view will be confirmed by reference to Isaiah lxxv. 9—14: “And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number. Therefore I will number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer: when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants

shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

It is clear that two classes of Jews are represented here,—the believing and attached servants of the living God, and the body described as forsaking him, and forgetting his holy mountain. Compare also Isaiah lxvi. 1—4: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil

before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

Here reference is clearly made to formalists, and therefore unconverted men are also represented as being inhabitants of Jerusalem. Against the city thus inhabited by good Jews and bad Jews, the great army is to come. Then, as we learn from Zech. xiv. 3, "The Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." This will be followed by the fulfilment of Isaiah xi. 11—16: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall

obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." And this is, perhaps, a prophecy parallel with Zech. x. 10—12.

But a question may here arise, How shall this great people be regathered from all quarters of the globe? how shall they be guided into the land of Canaan? Micah's prophecy will assist me to answer this question: "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them." (Micah ii. 12, 13.) Compare these words with the language of Ezek. xx. 33—44: "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out,

will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first-fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet

savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God." From these passages it is plain that the Lord himself will be their Leader. But, judging from the language of the text, it would appear that the Jews do not make the discovery concerning the great rank and power of their Leader, until a subsequent period.

I must not omit to remark that this work will be accompanied by *miraculous agency*. Thus we read (Isaiah lxvi. 19, 20): "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard

my fame, neither have seen my glory ; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." Compare this text with Jer. xxiii. 7, 8: " Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them ; and they shall dwell in their own land."

I must, in the next place, direct your attention to the *gracious effects* which accompany this restoration. " I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication." That is, the Holy Spirit will be abundantly poured forth upon the Jews, leading them to earnest supplication to the Lord their God ; perhaps for pardon, perhaps for increased light and knowledge. It is possible that reference is made to the same event in Ezek. xxxvi. 37. God had

been declaring the great mercies he had in store for this people; but though this, in his foreknowledge, had been determined upon, he adds, "I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."

These are the events which immediately precede "the vision of Christ to the mourners in Israel." Some there are, however, who with great force argue that Christ will actually descend upon the Mount of Olives, before these events take place. For myself, I cannot agree with them. Our Lord himself says, in Matt. xxiii. 39, "I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:" words which can only flow from the mouth of the converted. Therefore I infer their conversion precedes the recognition of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not, however, impossible that it may take place when the "*sign of the Son of man*" becomes visible; for we read in Matt. xxiv. 29—31, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all

the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." And this supposition is also borne out by Rev. i. 7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Indeed, it appears to me that we have nothing in the Word of God which will enable us to infer the length of period during which the sign of the Son of man shall continue, without the Son of man himself having come; nor do I see any guide in the Scripture as to the period of time which the conversion and restoration of Israel may occupy. This much is clear, that after this outpouring of the Spirit shall have taken place, they will recognise the Lord Jesus,—the pierced Nazarene will be at once seen, recognised, and acknowledged.

III. I am to examine by WHAT THIS GREAT EVENT WILL BE FOLLOWED. The text says, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in

bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." I would remark; therefore, that the vision of Christ to the mourners of Israel, is accompanied by THE MOST BITTER REPENTANCE. How little the world at large know of repentance! Repentance is looked upon as a mere homely dress, to be taken up after the gayer apparel of riot or dissipation is cast aside. Men suppose they can repent at pleasure,—that it is a mere effort of the will. It is ignorance upon this point which enables Satan to persuade so many to believe that the cries for pardon on a dying bed are always true repentance, and that it matters not if in health we live a good deal for the world, and in sickness begin to live a little for God. Surely "they do err, not knowing the Scriptures." They forget that Esau "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." They forget that Judas's repentance ended in his hanging himself, and "going to his own place." No, brethren, I trust "ye have not so learned Christ." Repentance is a good thing, and every good thing comes from God. Look at the origin of true repentance. In Acts v. 31, you read that God "exalted Jesus to his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to *give repentance* to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." What do we find

to be the proximate cause of repentance? Take the history of Peter, (Luke xxii. 61, 62,) "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." "And Peter went out and wept bitterly;" or take the history of Paul, (Acts ix. 5, 6,) it was when the Lord had revealed himself as JESUS, that Paul, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or, as he says, (Titus iii. 3—6,) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that *the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared*, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Fear may make us cry out and run from the Lord, and deprecate his presence, but there must be love to change our mind concerning sin, and to draw us with grateful sorrow to the Lord. The terrors of the Lord may arouse the sleeping heart,—the law will stir up the opposition of the carnal mind,—but it is the milder dispensation of the Gospel which overcomes enmity against God. The "cords of love" draw sinners to the Saviour. The

love of Christ constrains regenerate hearts "to live not unto themselves, but unto him who loved them, and gave himself for them."

Now observe how completely these statements are borne out by the text. It is when the Jews *look upon* him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn as one mourneth for his only son. It is the *sight of Jesus* which shall produce the full conviction of the extent of their sin—and shall make their stiff necks bow down, and their "lofty looks be humbled." Ezekiel, in his twentieth chapter, seems to confirm this view, for in ver. 34 the Lord says he will bring them out from the people, and will gather them out of the countries wherein they are scattered. In ver. 35 he says he will bring them into the wilderness, and will plead with them. In ver. 36 he describes the character of the pleading (not that of his personal presence, but) judicially, or guiding them with the pillar of cloud and fire, as with their fathers in the wilderness. In ver. 38 we learn that the rebels will be "purged out." But after all this, as we collect from vers. 42 and 43, they will *know the Lord*, and "remember their ways and their doings wherein they have been defiled."

Then indeed will there be lamentation and weeping and woe. The feelings of the brethren,

as they stood before Joseph, when he made himself known to them, are but a very faint type of the grief which shall be experienced by those whom Jesus was not ashamed to call brethren, who were "his own," according to the flesh, but who "received him not." Then will they grieve over opportunities lost, privileges disregarded, and, what is infinitely worse, the murderous onslaught upon the Son of man.*

It may appear strange that any distinction should be drawn, or any interval be supposed to exist between the outpouring of the Spirit of grace and supplication, and this bitter repentance to which I have just referred. But we must remember that the outpouring of the Spirit of grace and supplication is not to be restricted to a pentecostal effusion. There may indeed be such a manifestation of the Spirit, but continual supplies will doubtless be afforded. The Spirit is continually required, and will be continually vouchsafed to enlighten their eyes,

* Care must be taken not to confuse the appearance of the Lord in Ezek. xx. with that of Zech. xii. They are clearly different; one being in the wilderness, the other in Jerusalem. The one being before the Restoration, the other after. Mr. Cuninghame has some striking remarks on this point.

to spiritualize their hearts, and to make them meet for the promised inheritance.

But, to return to the text, we must remark *the character of this repentance*. I have already glanced at its bitterness being equal to that of a parent for an only child. I will not dilate upon that interesting description, but simply direct your attention to vers. 11 to 14, "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." These words represent the greatness and universality of the lamentation. The greatest grief ever manifested among the Jews was at the death of King Josiah. This illustrious King was mortally wounded by the archers at the battle of Hadad-rimmon, a place in the great plain of Esdraelon, near Megiddo. We are told that "all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah." And so it will be in the day of the Lord. The whole land will mourn; the royal tribes will

mourn, "The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart;" these will mourn that he who was born King of the Jews had been so long rejected from the throne of his father David. The prophets will be represented in this mournful season, for "the family of the house of Nathan (the prophet) will mourn apart, and their wives apart," because the Jews had so long slighted Jesus, the great prophet, raised up like unto Moses. The priesthood will not be excluded in this sad emulation. "The family of the house of Levi will mourn apart, and their wives apart," because of the contempt of the priestly office of Christ which their own priesthood typified, and was fulfilled in Him. Yea, the guilty, the most guilty, (Numb. xxv. 9—14,)* will vie with the more pious in expressions of grief. Yea, all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart, without exception, will join in the melancholy contemplation of the past, and in humble adoration of the Redeemer.

But this sorrow and lamentation will not continue for ever. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," for "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants

* See marginal reading, Zech. xii. 13.

of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Isaiah teaches us that "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

The Jews, *now* outcasts, *then* restored, will be the first people in the world, Jerusalem the metropolis of nations, the Lord Jesus Christ their King; and from them blessings far greater than we can imagine will flow forth to the whole world, so that we may truly say with the apostle, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

I might now at once bring the subject to a close, but I am aware that there is a seeming contradiction between the view I have placed before you, and the opinions of many who would tell us that the Scripture definitely states, "The Lord is at hand," "The Lord cometh as a thief," and therefore that any attempt to lay down any order of events as necessary to be accomplished before the second advent is to do away with the practical intention of such

a warning. I would remind such Christian brethren that the apostle does the same thing in 2 Thess. ii. 1—4, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Or I might reply to such an argument by saying it is nothing to the Lord to make the greatest events succeed one another with the greatest rapidity. A storm may gather and burst upon us in a moment, and whether the archangel's trump shall sound, and then the storm burst, or whether the storm come first, and the trumpet sound afterwards, all may be done, as the apostle says, "in the twinkling of an eye." But in either case it behoves us to have our own loins girded, and our own lamps trimmed, that we ourselves may be ready. God grant we may be so!

There is also another point of difficulty which

may occur. I mean, the question whether this prophecy has not already been fulfilled, inasmuch as St. John, in his Gospel, quotes this very verse as if fulfilled: but if you will look at John xix. 37, you will perceive the quotation is only made for the sake of the word "*pierced*," that he might show the particular treatment, submitted to by our Lord, was that which had always been predicted of him. But, independently of this, you will find that there are many prophecies which have a partial fulfilment under the First Advent, and which will have an extended fulfilment under the Second Advent.

But take the whole of this prophecy, and you will see that it never has been fulfilled. The time which most nearly resembles that predicted, is the period of the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the second chapter of the Acts: but notwithstanding that after Peter's sermon many were pricked to the heart, and 3,000 souls were added to the Church of Christ, still that is not at all commensurate with the mourning of *all the families* spoken of by Zechariah.

But look around you now. Though, blessed be God, there is "a remnant according to the election of grace," still the Jews as a nation have rejected Christ,—they still refuse the Crucified One,—and, therefore, their present history con-

tradicts the notion of fulfilment. The Spirit of grace and supplication has not yet been poured upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Or turn to the page of history, and you will find the nations who came against Jerusalem triumphed ;—the arch of Titus proclaims the fact. Where, then, is the fulfilment of the prophecy which speaks of God's destroying all the nations that come against Jerusalem ?

And now, brethren, let me endeavour, as God may help me, to apply the subject to yourselves. I will, then, offer to you a few words, to PUT YOU UPON YOUR GUARD AGAINST MISTAKES, and a few more to CHEER YOU UPON YOUR ROAD ZIONWARDS.

1. A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION to prevent mistakes. From what has been said, you will have perceived, that though great blessings await the Israel of God, yet the rebels are to be purged out. This is, in fact, very much the same truth as that taught us by the apostle, who says, "All are not Israel that are of Israel." It will be the true Israel alone who will thus mourn over their sin of unbelief. But though there are certain promises of a temporal character exclusively applicable to the Jews, there are also very many in which we have a joint interest. There are

many descriptions of the state and conduct of converted Jews which are equally descriptive of the Church at large. Amongst these is the text. By faith the believer sees him who is invisible : by faith we can apply to ourselves the language of St. Peter (1st Epis. i. 8), " Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Let me ask, then, if you have received those clear views of Christ which lead you to mourn for sin ?

Brethren, it is no sure proof that you are in earnest about your soul, that you have been attending here, week after week, hearkening unto these prophetic lectures. It may be, that to this very hour you know nothing of the plague of your own heart and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Have I, then, before me one thoughtless person ? One who speaks as if religion were well enough in its place, but who is constantly expressing his fears lest people should " go too far ?" Have I one such thoughtless person, who, because he finds that others entertain with confidence views of which he understands nothing, laughs at them for what he terms their eccentricities and follies, but who has never felt there was occasion to retire and mourn over his own shortcomings ? My fellow-sinner, you

ought to doubt very much whether you have any TRUE religion at all. I will grant your morality,—I will not deny your amiability,—I will not question your popularity in the world; but I do very much question whether you are BORN AGAIN. If you were, your views of sin would be different; you would know more of that grace of God in Christ Jesus which would make you mourn before the Lord for having offended so kind a Father, for having dishonoured so precious a Saviour, and for having so frequently vexed his Holy Spirit.

2. Have I any here, who, instead of seeking to increase in that knowledge of Christ which shall lead to enlarged love and to greater personal holiness, sits as a critic upon sermons, a quibbler upon the most trifling points? I will venture to caution him too, lest, in sitting as a judge over others, he should forget himself as a sinner, and, neglecting to humble himself before the Lord, should also evidence that he has not seen that Saviour, “whom to know is eternal life.”

3. But, amongst you, it is highly probable that many rather *fear* this mournful state than *desire* it; and would openly say, they prefer their present happiness to misery equal to that described in the text. Alas! there are too many who thus

think and thus act: but let me warn them, for it is far better to mourn now than to mourn hereafter. "Blessed are they who mourn now, for they shall be comforted." But if you *will* not grieve for sin now, you *must* grieve hereafter. For the hardened and impenitent will find their portion in that awful place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

4. Lastly, may God help me to say a few words BY WAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE CHILD OF GOD. Are you amongst those who thus commune with your own heart, and, deeply convinced of sin, are fearful lest your sin should never be pardoned? See how mercifully God speaks of his Israel: "Behold," he says, "I am married unto you." The Lord has made you his people. He has revealed unto you your sinfulness, it is true; and why has he thus convinced you of sin, but because he has mercy in store for you? He will also convince you of righteousness, even of the righteousness of Jesus. Fear not, then: I will not attempt to extenuate your guilt,—I will not deny you *deserve* punishment; but I am sure, if you turn to Jesus, and look upon him who was crucified for your sins, you will find, that "with him there is mercy, with him there is plenteous redemption;" and I may

say to you, as Nathan spake to David aforetime, "The Lord hath put away your sin."

Once more, let me ask, if any of you are GRIEVING BECAUSE YOU DO NOT GRIEVE? I mean, are you lamenting that you have not a deeper sense of your sin? I know full well your state; your feeling is *right*, but it is *dangerous*. Take care lest you make your sorrow for sin the ground of your hope of salvation. Feelings are often placed where Christ ought to be alone. But your wishes are good: it is a good thing to feel deeply for sin. Go, then, to the throne of grace, and God will give you the Spirit of grace, who, as He unfolds to you more of the Saviour's love, will unveil also more of your own sin; but this will be only to endear to you still more that Saviour who has "loved you with an everlasting love, and, therefore, with lovingkindness has drawn you" to Himself.

LECTURE XII.

THE HALLELUJAHS OF THE RANSOMED CHURCH.

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REVELATION XIX. 1, 2.

“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments.”

THERE are seasons when those who are called to preach the glorious Gospel of the Son of God, would especially desire the mind of an angel, and the voice of a seraph. For some of the subjects upon which they have to speak are of so sublime a character, that none but the very highest class

of intellect, and the most melodious notes, are competent suitably to declare them.

Such is the nature of the remarkable topic for meditation which is to be brought before you this evening. How great and glorious a subject it is ! We desire to lead you to anticipate that day, when, loud as from voices without number, and sweet as from blessed voices, the courts of heaven shall resound with Hallelujahs to His honour, who will then, by the full manifestation of his glory, prove himself to be above all praise. You must be sensible, my beloved friends, that the highest notes which even the hosts of heaven can raise, would not suffice to make known his worth.

“ For wisdom and strength are his alone,
Stupendous, rich, and sovereign grace :
Salvation sits upon his throne,
And glory brightens in his face.”

I need not say, therefore, how utterly inadequate I feel for the task which has been assigned to me : and when complying with the request of your beloved minister to address you upon this heavenly theme, I gladly take shelter in that peculiarly encouraging word, “ God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the

world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.”* It is, my beloved friends, upon the assistance of this God of all grace, that I altogether depend. I therefore earnestly intreat your fervent prayers that He will make his strength perfect in my weakness, and that He will accompany the preached word by the power of his Holy Spirit, to the end that every individual present may have his mind and heart so raised by the grandeur of the subject, that his one desire may be to be found among that glorious company, whose voices shall be heard in heaven in an universal chorus, saying, “*Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God.*” Oh that our heavenly Father may, for his dear Son’s sake, thus bless us, and make this a season never to be forgotten through the countless ages of eternity!

The *first* subject which commands attention in this sublime passage, IS THE VOICE WHICH THE APOSTLE HEARD. It was the voice of praise,—ALLELUIAH! and this repeated, “Again they said, Alleluiah!” and this an universal voice. “The

* 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, all his servants, and all that fear him, both small and great," unite in the chorus; and that with such overpowering strength, that the only sound to which the inspired apostle could compare their *Alleluiah*, was *the voice of many waters*; of such mighty cataracts as the Falls of Niagara, whose tremendous rush is heard at many miles distance; or as the voice of mighty thundrings, even of those awakening peals by which the God of glory manifests his power, rending the vault of heaven above, and shaking the earth below, terrifying the beasts of the forest, breaking the cedars,* and making even kings to tremble.

The grandeur and extent of this voice call for special notice. For, reflect for a moment, my beloved friends, what praise is, and from whence it springs. Praise is the highest act of worship which a creature can offer to the Almighty. It differs from prayer, which is the offspring of necessity. Praise is the flower of joyful love; of love so ardent, and so completely filling the mind and heart, that when offered with sincerity, whether by a redeemed sinner, an angel, a seraph, or one of those exalted spirits who see the face of God, he cannot contain his joy, but

* Psalm xxix.

must give vent to his feelings of adoring reverence, delighted complacency, and self-annihilating gratitude, by sounding out Hallelujahs to his name.

Hence we find the Psalmist breaking forth in such language as this,—“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. . . . O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.”*

In the same admiring strain, the prophet Jeremiah, when predicting the return of the Lord's people from Babylon, expresses himself in such words as these,—“Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: The great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work.”†

In all these Scriptures, you observe the flower of joyful love; the servants of the Lord, unable to contain their admiration of Jehovah, breaking forth into expressions of highest praise.

* Psalm ciii. 1, 2; civ. 1—3. † Jer. xxxii. 17—19.

Nor, my beloved friends, does praise stop here; but his servants, delighting in his glory, and earnestly desiring that the Lord may receive the honour due to his name, use their utmost powers to excite others to extol him. Hence you find the Seraphim “crying one unto another, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”* The sweet Psalmist of Israel, also, thus pours forth the desires of his heart, “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”† Nor did his fervour rest here; but, as if no created bounds could satisfy the ardent longings of his soul, he calls out, “Praise ye Him, all his angels: praise ye Him, all his hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Let them praise the name of the Lord; yea, let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord. For his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven. Praise ye the Lord.”‡

This spirit of praise, which is the characteristic feature of joyful love, and which, more or less, subsists at all times where this godlike grace is found, derives fresh energy from those providential dealings of the Lord Jehovah, which

* Isaiah vi. 3. † Psalm cvii. 15.

‡ Psalm cxlviii. 2—5, 13; cl. 6.

bring to light such parts of the Divine character as were before partially known, but which these providential events bring conspicuously into view. Thus it was after the victory gained over Pharaoh, that "Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. . . . Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"*

So it was that Isaiah, after saying to his countrymen, in the name of the Lord, "I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten by me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee;"† it was after delivering these joyful tidings, that this sublime prophet thus invited all creation to praise the Lord, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."‡ Each fresh exhibition of his power and goodness, of his sovereign

* Exod. xv. 1—11.

† Isaiah xlv. 21; 22.

‡ Isaiah xlv. 23.

grace and marvellous loving-kindness, in a manner, adding new fuel to the flame of admiring love; and this bursting forth, as it were, in songs of thanksgiving.

Beyond, however, this more ordinary cause for praise, the Alleluia in my text is peculiarly significant. It is, of all other acts of His redeemed, the very one which does most honour to the Lord. For, if you attentively examine this sublime book, you will see that the great contest which it unfolds, regards the person to whom divine worship shall be offered; whether the Lord Jehovah shall have his rightful homage, or whether Satan shall share it with Him. We know that, previously to the coming of our Lord, this fallen spirit, as "the god of this world,"* had usurped this divine honour; that the whole Gentile population offered "*sacrifice to devils, and not to God.*"† With this usurped glory, Satan very unwillingly parted. It was not until, in the emblematical language of this book, "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven;"‡ or, in plain language, until the idol temples were closed, and

* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

† 1 Cor. x. 20.

‡ Rev. xii. 7, 8.

Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire: it was not till that signal period, that the words of our Lord, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,"* received any extensive accomplishment.

When this victory was gained, as recorded in the twelfth chapter of this book, "the devil came down in great wrath, and went to make war with those who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus."† It was the object of his warfare to regain this worship. That which he could no longer openly obtain in the heathen temples, he artfully accomplished through that masterpiece of iniquity, the Church of Rome, called, as the great enemy of the truth, by the Apostle John, by the expressive name of "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."‡ For, through the agency of the Church of Rome, converting the pure Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into that debased and corrupt form of Christianity which sanctions the worship of the Virgin Mary, and other practices similar to the idolatry of the heathen, Satan obtained a renewal of his authority over the secular Roman empire.

* John xii. 31, 32. † Rev. xii. 12, 17.

‡ Rev. xvii. 5.

It is recorded, on this account, in the thirteenth chapter, that all the world wondered after the beast. "They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast and caused that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed."*

To put an end to this usurped authority, and to bring back to the true worship of God, all who are called by his name, is the purpose for which the angels mentioned in the fourteenth chapter are sent forth. The first, "flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and WORSHIP HIM (you mark the expression) that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."†

The second angel announces the fall of Babylon.‡

The third angel following them, as if to mark the rapidity with which this messenger would come, utters with a loud voice this solemn warning, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in

* Rev. xiii. 4, 15.

† Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

‡ Rev. xiv. 8.

his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.”*

After the appearance of these angels, St. John saw an animating vision of “those who had gotten the victory over the beast,” and who, while “standing upon a sea of glass, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb,” are saying, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”† In this manner the hope of victory is given to the followers of the Lamb, whose spirits might be fainting under the cruel oppressions of the beast.

After this, the seven angels who are commissioned to pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon those who had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image, come forth.

But these judgments do not produce repentance: for the seventeenth chapter brings before us the Church of Rome, as Babylon, described under the emblem of a “woman arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of

* Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

† Rev. xv. 2—4.

Jesus.”* It is in this her last form, when she is triumphantly boasting, saying in her heart, “I sit as a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow;”† it is then that another angel is seen coming down from heaven, “having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit.”‡

This announcement is followed by the charge, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”§ Then it is that the apostle “hears a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.” For their souls, filled with love to God, and with joyful admiration of his glorious acts, cannot contain their delight. Seeing also, that the Lord, having gained the victory, had thus proved himself as the Lord God Omnipotent, to be alone worthy to be worshipped by all his intelligent creatures, they express their homage by singing hallelujahs

* Rev. xvii. 4, 6.

† Rev. xviii. 7.

‡ Rev. xviii. 1, 2.

§ Rev. xviii. 20.

to his name in their highest notes : and by calling upon all his servants, small and great, to do the same. Thus they at the same time gratify their own joyful love by their songs of praise, while they ascribe to Him all glory and honour, by worshipping Him who *is a spirit, in spirit and truth.*

Oh ! that we, my beloved friends, partook a little of their ardent love, so that the delight of our souls, and the very acme of our joy, should consist in praising the Lord and giving honour to his name.

Having thus attempted, however feebly, to describe the nature of praise, and the special cause of its being offered, I would, *secondly*, call your attention TO THE PERSONS WHO RAISE THESE JOYFUL ALLELUIAS. Although these individuals are variously described, they have one general character ; the voice which the apostle heard was the “ great voice of much people in heaven.”

To this, my beloved friends, it is important to attend, both that it may be seen, that although the immediate occasion of their alleluias is that God had avenged the blood of his servants on Babylon, still this was not done with those malicious feelings which characterize revenge in

our present fallen state, but from far more exalted motives, and also that we may be assured that these alleluias were uttered by the most pure and most holy beings.

While we are on this side the grave, we are to love every human being with a love of benevolence. For however deep he may be sunk in vice while he is in this world, he is within the limits of that glorious Gospel which offers salvation to the vilest sinner,—a salvation which God in his goodness and mercy, and for his dear Son's sake, is willing freely to bestow. The apostle St. Paul, therefore, when writing to Timothy, enjoins that “prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, should be made for all men.”*

Yes, my beloved friends, whatever abhorrence we may feel regarding their corrupt doctrines or wicked practices, there is not an Infidel, an idolater, or hardened blasphemer now living, for whom we are not bound to pray, and to use every means in our power to bring him to the knowledge of the truth as it is Jesus. This feeling is beautifully conveyed in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed.”† We see, also, the prophet Daniel exhorting even the proud monarch Nebuchadnezzar, and his impious son

* 1 Tim. ii. 1.

† Jer. li. 9.

Belshazzar, to turn from their iniquities, and there is not an individual, however immersed he may be in the errors of the Church of Rome, or in any other evil course, but we would gladly take hold of him and pluck him as a brand from the burning.

During our present state of existence, we are not to exult over any, but to remember that it is the grace of God alone which makes us to differ. We are to follow the example of our blessed Saviour, who, when he drew nigh to Jerusalem, wept over it, and with the voice of tenderness and compassion, cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*

I mention this, my dear friends, to show that when we set forth the joy of the inhabitants of heaven in the downfall of Babylon, we do it not as if we took any pleasure in denouncing the judgments of God. No; if there is any heart harder than another, or any one present who has sunk deeper into sin than any other, we would tell that person there is mercy for him at this moment. The God of love is sitting upon a

* Matt. xxiii. 37.

throne of grace, ready to hear his cry. The Lord Jesus, his well-beloved Son, is ready to plead his cause; the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love, is ready to change his heart of stone into a heart of flesh: yea, all things are ready. The ministers of Christ are ready to teach you; the Word of God lies ready and open to instruct you. Only come, and welcome. There is pardon, peace, present comfort, everlasting glory, waiting for you. Only come to Christ, and all is yours. Life is yours; death is yours; yea, Christ himself is yours.

This is our condition during our stay on earth; and therefore, as I said, we are now to love every fellow-sinner with a love of benevolence, and do all that in us lies for his salvation.

But when the enemies of God are brought under his just judgments, and they sink into that pit of misery which is prepared for the devil and his angels, then, as they cease to be objects of the Divine compassion, and are only the objects of His just displeasure, the favour of the inhabitants of heaven ceases also: and although, while they were upon earth, the heavenly host would have rejoiced in the repentance of those unhappy persons, now, when they see that God has taken vengeance upon them from the purest motives, they raise their Hallelujahs, even while

the smoke of their torment riseth up for ever and ever.

Dwelling in heaven, the saints of God are in the place where everything is seen in its true and native colours. Sin is beheld in its horrible deformity; holiness in its perfect beauty; God in his boundless goodness; the Lord Jesus in his ineffable love. And while they are thus happily placed, they have in themselves every quality suited to enable them to form a right judgment. They are free from all those feelings which have a tendency to warp the judgment and blind the understanding. They are in the immediate presence of God; and all His dealings in providence and grace are there made far more clear than the light of the noon-day sun can make any object in the present world; for they are in that blessed abode, where they "have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." * The atonement of the Son of God, harmonizing all the divine attributes, sheds such a bright lustre all around, that they intuitively see the justice of God in inflicting punishment on the guilty, while he makes the faithful to be partakers of those pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. †

* Rev. xxi. 23.

† Psalm xvi. 11.

When, therefore, “ *the voice of much people in heaven* ” is heard, “ *saying, Alleluia !* ” it is the song of those who, both from their inward holiness and from their advantageous position, give forth their praises with the purest motives, and the most perfect intelligence.

This will clearly appear, when we consider THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OR OCCASION OF THEIR PRAISE, which is made known by the apostle in these emphatic words, saying, “ Alleluia ! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God : for true and righteous are his judgments.”

Permit me, whilst I invite your attention to this last head of my discourse, to intreat your prayers for a fresh supply of that strength which comes from above. Oh that the Lord may put honour upon his own Word ! may so accompany us while setting forth his praise, that we may now anticipate the blessed season when this song shall be sung : and, ere we actually join the assembled multitude, may begin to lisp at least some of their Hallelujahs ! Let me have your fervent prayers, my Christian brethren, for this grace ; and may they be heard and answered, for the sake of our blessed Saviour !

Let us, then, as if the gates were opened, and

some of the distant sounds were falling upon our ears, CONSIDER THE OCCASION OF THIS BURST OF PRAISE; OF THESE ALLELUIAS WHICH FILL THE COURTS OF HEAVEN. This, then, is the cause. They said, "Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: FOR TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ARE HIS JUDGMENTS: FOR HE HATH JUDGED HER WHICH DID CORRUPT THE EARTH, AND HATH AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS AT HER HAND."

Here you observe, that the first note in their song of praise is *Salvation*. This word is so full of grateful melody, that the very mention of it calls forth the Hallelujahs of the saints.

"Salvation! oh, the joyful sound!

What pleasure to our ears!

A sovereign balm for every wound,

A cordial for our fears."

But here, this note is sung in connexion with the deliverance which the Lord has wrought in the destruction of Babylon. To join in the chorus, therefore, with any measure of the spirit of the inhabitants of heaven, we must consider the evils from which the redeemed Church of Christ will then be delivered.

First, I would notice that greatest of all evils—I call it so, because, more than any other sin, it dishonours the only true God, the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—namely, the idolatry of the Church of Rome. This will cease upon her destruction. That she is an idolatrous Church, all true Protestants clearly see.

The following is the declaration which was made by our Protestant Queen, whom may the Lord long preserve in peace and prosperity, and in the open profession of the Protestant faith of her Royal ancestors! This, I say, was the declaration made by our gracious Queen, when, for the first time after her accession to the throne, she met the great council of the nation in Parliament assembled:—

“I, Victoria, do solemnly and sincerely, and in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatever: and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain

and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever : and without any dispensation already granted me by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope or any other person or persons or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null or void from the beginning.”*

That this declaration of her Majesty is according to truth, is fully proved by the first canon on the Eucharist, decreed in the Council of Trent, which is in the following words : “ Whosoever shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there are truly, really, and substantially contained the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with his soul and Divinity, and consequently Christ entire, but

* See the declaration required to be made by every King or Queen of England before the House of Parliament, or at his or her coronation, by the Bill of Rights, 1st William and Mary, c. 2, s. 10 ; and Act of 30 Charles II. c. 2, s. 2.

shall affirm that he is only there in a sign or figure, or by his power, let him be accursed."

You observe the grievous dishonour here done to Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person: a curse being denounced upon every one who does not say that not only his body and blood, but also the soul and divinity of the Lord Emmanuel, God in our nature, are lodged in a piece of bread, or rather in a wafer, made but a few hours before by an ordinary man. What is this, but to equal the idolatry of him who is mentioned by the prophet Isaiah, "He planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take part thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god and worshippeth it. He falleth down thereto. He prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my God."*. What is the difference between this ancient idolater and the adoration of the mass directed by the Church of Rome? What, but that the one worships the stock of a tree, and the other a wafer, or a piece of bread.

Now, therefore, when this idolatrous Church is fallen, the inhabitants of Heaven, with voices loud "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice

* Isa. xlv. 14, 15, 17.

of mighty thunderings, say, Alleluia! Salvation. And the four-and-twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, saying, Amen, Alleluia!" for the inhabitants of the earth are delivered from her who is "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Further: salvation will be sung when Babylon falls, as there will then be complete deliverance from the deceits of that Church, which appears under the form of a woman, having "upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY!"* a designation given to her because, like ancient Babylon, she hath deceived the nations by "the multitude of her sorceries and the great abundance of her enchantments."†

Who can tell the number of immortal souls who have perished, deceived by her false miracles, her indulgences for sin, her purgatorial atonement, her merit of works, her penances, pilgrimages, prayers for the dead, and all that "*deceivableness of unrighteousness*,"‡ whereby she has deluded her votaries, while she prevents them from detecting her errors by refusing them the free use of the Word of God, substituting, to a very great extent, in the stead of that blessed Book, the decrees of Councils, or the traditions of men? The heart shudders at the thought.

* Rev. xvii. 5. † Isa. xlvii. 9. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 10.

But "BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN;" and the inhabitants of heaven, who rejoice when even one sinner is brought to repentance, now break forth into Hallelujahs, because this mystery of iniquity can deceive no longer.

Along with this deliverance from these soul-destroying errors may be mentioned, as a third cause why this great multitude sing *Alleluia*, the deliverance then wrought from the tyranny of that persecuting Church, which is so appropriately described as a woman "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."*

To attempt the detail of her cruel persecutions would be a task far too painful, even were it possible (which it would not be) to compress such an account within the space allotted to a discourse. It is sufficient to remind you, in addition to our own martyred forefathers, of the countless numbers of Protestants slain in the Low Countries, in France, among the Waldenses and Albigenses; and above all, of those who have been put to death by order of the officers of the Inquisition.†

* Rev. xvii. 6.

† The reader will find clear information upon this subject in a sound and useful publication, *Essays on Romanism*, by a Layman. Seeleys, 1839. Chapter on Persecution, pp. 462—474.

Blessed be God! *Babylon* (at the period commemorated in the text) *is fallen*, and these dreadful cruelties are no more. Well, indeed, may the inhabitants of those realms of bliss, where death is unknown, and where peace and love and holy joy continually dwell, then cry out, "*Alleluia, Salvation.*" *For death is now swallowed up in victory.*

The deliverance, by the fall of Babylon, from these and other evils, which time forbids my detailing, would fully justify these Hallelujahs of the redeemed.

The word *Salvation*, however, comprehends far more than deliverance from evil. It includes the *blessings* which will follow the downfall of this apostate Church; for no sooner is judgment executed upon her, than a voice is heard, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

To describe the glories of that day, would exceed the powers even of the angel Gabriel himself; for that will be the day, not only "of the espousals of the King, but of the gladness of his heart;"* the day in which "He will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied."† For it will be the time in which he will *present to Himself* his spouse, the

* Cant. iii. 11.

† Isa. liii. 11.

Church, “a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before him:”* when He will gather to himself that innumerable “multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who shall stand before the throne in white robes, and palms in their hands,”† as the emblems of victory; and all, as with one voice, shall cry, “Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!”‡

Who can declare the blessedness of that day when the imperfection of our spiritual vision, and the obscurity of the medium in which future glory is now beheld, shall be completely removed: when with this darkness, all the strifes and jealousies and heart-burnings they have produced, shall be no more? When the redeemed, gathered alike from the remnant of scattered Judah and outcast Israel, and the multitudes of the Gentile nations, all of whom have been loved with one Father’s love, redeemed with one Saviour’s precious blood, regenerated by one Spirit, accepted in one perfect righteousness, raised by one Almighty arm, sanctified after one likeness, and fashioned like to one glorious body; and this the likeness and the body of the Lord Jesus Christ; when this glorious company thus

* Eph. v. 27.

† Rev. vii. 9.

‡ Ver. 10.

gathered and thus united under one Head, shall appear as trophies of the Father's love, of the Saviour's grace, and of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power. So great a salvation may well produce that glorious burst of joy, which reached the apostle's ears, when he heard "a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia. Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Let not one voice be silent, but let all creation praise and magnify his name.

Comprehensive, however, as this word *Salvation* is, and unbounded as are the blessings which it includes, it does not suffice to express the joy of this ransomed host. Praise, the flower of joyful love, still puts forth other blossoms. They not only say, "*Alleluia, Salvation,*" but these additional notes are heard, "*Glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God.*" Their hearts being filled with admiring love and adoring gratitude at this marvellous work of God, they joyfully exert their utmost powers to give utterance to their bliss, by these special ascriptions of praise.

It must be carefully remembered, my beloved friends, that this signal destruction of Babylon will be accomplished by the Lord Himself. Thus it is written in the eighteenth chapter and eighth

verse, "She shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her;" and, again, at the twentieth verse, "Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." While, therefore, the multitude in Heaven shout forth, "*Alleluia, Salvation,*" they joyfully declare to whom all the praise is due.

They ascribe first, "GLORY." The proper meaning of this word, is the shining forth of inward excellence. As the glory of the sun consists in the outshining of the visible rays of light and heat which are produced from its interior properties, so the glory of God consists in the manifestation of those excellences which, belonging to Him as JEHOVAH, Lord of all, have subsisted in the Godhead from all eternity. These hidden excellencies are now made manifest; for, his enemies being destroyed, He reigns conspicuously, before all, the Lord God omnipotent. Truth, justice, goodness, mercy, wisdom, power, and holiness, all appear evidently and gloriously in Him, and in the Son of His love. To Him the celestial inhabitants ascribe glory; for glory shines in his face who is the great, the glorious God.

Honour and power also are his. If there be any difference in the meaning of the words

“glory” and “honour,” it is this, That glory, as was before mentioned, properly signifies the outshining of inward excellence, but honour is the acknowledgment of that glory by the beholders. As, where a victory is gained, the conquering army have the *glory*, but the *honour* is awarded to them by those who hear of their prowess, or are gainers by their victory. While therefore, the glory of God shines forth in the destruction of Babylon, let all creation ascribe honour to his name.

Nor can we refrain, my beloved Christian friends, from specially noticing these emphatic words of the heavenly choir,—“*Alleluia*, Salvation, glory, honour, and power, be unto THE LORD OUR GOD.” For here is the acme of this song of praise. Here it is that joyful love becomes more joyful still, because it is “the Lord our God who hath gotten him the victory.” Yes, my Christian friends, that gracious God who has loved you with an everlasting love, who sent his Son to die for your sins, and to rise again for your justification, who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, who, notwithstanding your manifold sins and short comings, has thus far led you on to glory, and has promised never to leave you nor forsake you, until, raising you up at the last day, He shall present you faultless

before his throne. This is the God, to whom the voice of praise, "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings," is raised. Oh, anticipate the blessed day when you shall join the chorus of the redeemed! And let your inmost soul go forth in such desires as these :—

Oh! for a sweet seraphic voice,
To sing my Saviour's praise ;
To show his goodness and his love,
And all his bounteous grace.

I'd sound his praise to heavenly heights,
And tell the angelic host,
Of all the wonders he has wrought,
And in Him make my boast.

The lowest deep should hear the sound
Of Jesu's glorious name,
And through created nature's bound,
I'd spread abroad his fame.

Yes, blessed Lord, thy precious name
Should dwell upon my tongue ;
And JESUS and salvation be
The theme of every song.

But it is time that I should bring my discourse to a practical improvement.

Let the subject, then, teach us at least these important lessons.

First, the grandeur of the Gospel of the Lord

Jesus Christ ; for to what a height does my text, faintly and feebly as it has been opened, raise us.

It brings us into the company of the heavenly host, and to that glorious period when the purposes of God having been fulfilled, all that love his name shall have the highest honour conferred upon them that creatures can have, that of singing to His praise Hallelujahs before his throne. The courts of Heaven are made to resound with such delightful melody, that all creation will break forth with joy, "every knee bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Let me recommend you, then, my beloved friends, frequently to meditate upon those glorious visions which this sublime book reveals. Follow the apostle's counsel, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

The more habitually you do this, the stronger will be your faith in things yet unseen, and the greater will be your diligence to be partakers of the glory that shall be revealed. As you dwell upon these animating subjects, new and delightful views of your inheritance will be opened

* Col. iii. 1, 2.

to you; prospects which will at once fill your soul with love to God, and with earnest desires to be conformed to his image.

Oh! that the Holy Spirit might fulfil this night that part of his gracious office; that He may “show us things to come,” so that from henceforth we may have “our conversation in Heaven,” and be “looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God.”

Secondly, how ought this subject also to lead us to earnest desires that a spirit of love and peace and harmony should universally prevail among “all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” For if, among the redeemed in heaven, there is but one song; if *the four and twenty elders, the four living creatures, the multitude whom no man can number, the small and great* of every tribe and tongue; if they all unite in saying, “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power be unto the Lord our God;”—if there be not one jarring note, but all, however varied their rank, whether they be the elders, the ministers of Christ, (as many expositors regard *the living creatures,*) or the general body of the redeemed, small and great, all raising their voices to the highest pitch in one note of adoring praise, how ought it to shame us that there should be

such strifes and divisions among true believers while on earth, and these frequently caused by mere shibboleths, mere trivial matters of form, which are scarcely worth a second thought.

Let it be our aim to live in a climate into which these questions never enter. Instead of resembling the wild sea-gull, who, when the storm and the tempest have raised the billows mountains high, sports upon the waves, let us be like the peaceful dove who hastened to the ark with the olive branch between her lips; or, rather, like Him who gave us the "new commandment, Love one another."* The nearer we come to him, and the more we attain of his likeness, the more shall we regret that ever an unkind word should have passed our lips, or that any other spirit than the spirit of love should have dwelt in our hearts.

Oh, that He would now, for the sake of our blessed Saviour, condescend to come and take up his abode with us: that he would so fill our hearts with love to God and to all who love his name, and so move the hearts of all his people, that Heaven might, in a measure, begin on earth, and that what was said of the apostolic times, might with truth be said in our days, "*See how these Christians love!*"

* John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12, 17.

Further: How ought this subject to lead us to compassionate those whom the Church of Rome has seduced by her enchantments, and to use our utmost exertions to persuade them to attend to the warning given from Heaven in the preceding chapter, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

It is well worthy of remark, that immediately before this charge is given, St. John saw an angel come down from Heaven, "having great power: and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." As if the Lord, foreseeing the dreadful miseries that would come upon all who remained in her communion, would, in the riches of his grace and tender mercy, leave no means untried to make the warning effectual. He, therefore, employs one of his chief messengers, an angel, "having great power, and enlightening the earth with his glory."

Nor need we be surprised at this, when we consider the terrible destruction that will overtake those who are found in her when the smoke of her torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. I know no part of Scripture which is so deeply

affecting, especially from this consideration, that so far from the smoke of her torment producing any compassion toward her, so fully will the Heavenly host be convinced that she is only receiving the due reward of her iniquities, that we read, "AGAIN THEY SAID, ALLELUIA, AND HER SMOKE ROSE UP FOR EVER AND EVER."

Oh, my friends, when we think that such may be the everlasting condition, not of one, but of many thousands, yea, tens of thousands of our fellow-sinners, who that has any sympathy or tenderness, but would wish for a voice loud as the cry of this mighty angel, to utter the charge, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?" More especially, when we see those who were at one time ministers of our own apostolic Church, so deluded as actually to join the communion of Rome, and entice others to do the same, who does not mourn for them, and feel, however great their sin has been, the more earnest should we be in our exertions to convert them from their fatal error.

I say, therefore, let this subject lead us to exert every Scriptural means in our power to enforce the charge, "Come out of her, my people;" and especially to engage in earnest

prayer to God, for his dear Son's sake, that He would show them their delusion, and incline their hearts to profit by His mercy.

It is possible that some one may be present who is on the verge of this precipice, or debating in his mind whether he should not follow those who have recently left our Church. If I am addressing any such person, I desire, with the affection of a father and the sincerity of a friend, to warn him of his danger. To prevent the salutary alarm which these latter chapters of the Book of Revelation are so well calculated to produce, some modern expositors have attempted to show that the Church of Rome is not intended in the passages of Scripture to which I have referred. My dear friends, believe not this vain imagination. The most learned and intelligent interpreters of this book have united in declaring, that by Babylon the Church of Rome is meant. So graphic is the description, and so many are the points of resemblance, that a writer has said with great force, that if a description, similar to that of Babylon in this book, were given of a person charged with a public offence, together with a reward for his apprehension, the Pope of Rome would immediately be arrested.

Accept, therefore, the warning, and flee from the fowler's snare, ere sudden destruction overtake you.

Finally, my beloved Christian friends, let this subject encourage your hearts in the crisis in which our lot is fallen.

We may not, indeed, know certainly the exact place in the calendar of Prophecy in which we stand. To some among us, it may be doubtful whether the two witnesses have yet been slain, or whether the great persecution which the Word of God predicts has yet taken place. But this we do know, my beloved Christian friends and brethren, that we are on the conqueror's side, and that the sure Word of Prophecy declares, as to those who make war with the Lamb, that "the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful."

And, therefore, if the encouragements lately given to the Church of Rome, and the exertions of her followers, should succeed so far as to make it needful for us to follow the footsteps of our Protestant forefathers who sealed their testimony to their faith at the stake, we need not fear: we shall be among that blessed number

who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and who sing that song which none but themselves can sing, or, if we should not be so highly privileged, we shall still be of that great multitude whose voice the apostle heard in Heaven, saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God."

Buckle on, then, your armour afresh. "Be strong, yea, be strong; quit you like men." Remember, "that He that is for us is greater than they that are against us;" and that He has said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* Look forward to the day when He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; and when, seated on his glorious throne, He shall greet you with those blessed words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."†

Anticipate this blessed day. It is near at hand. For "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry:"‡ and even at the present time we can almost hear the distant thundering of the heavenly voices.

* Rev. ii. 10.

† Matt. xxv. 21.

‡ Heb. x. 37.

Let us, then, conclude the service with the following hymn :—

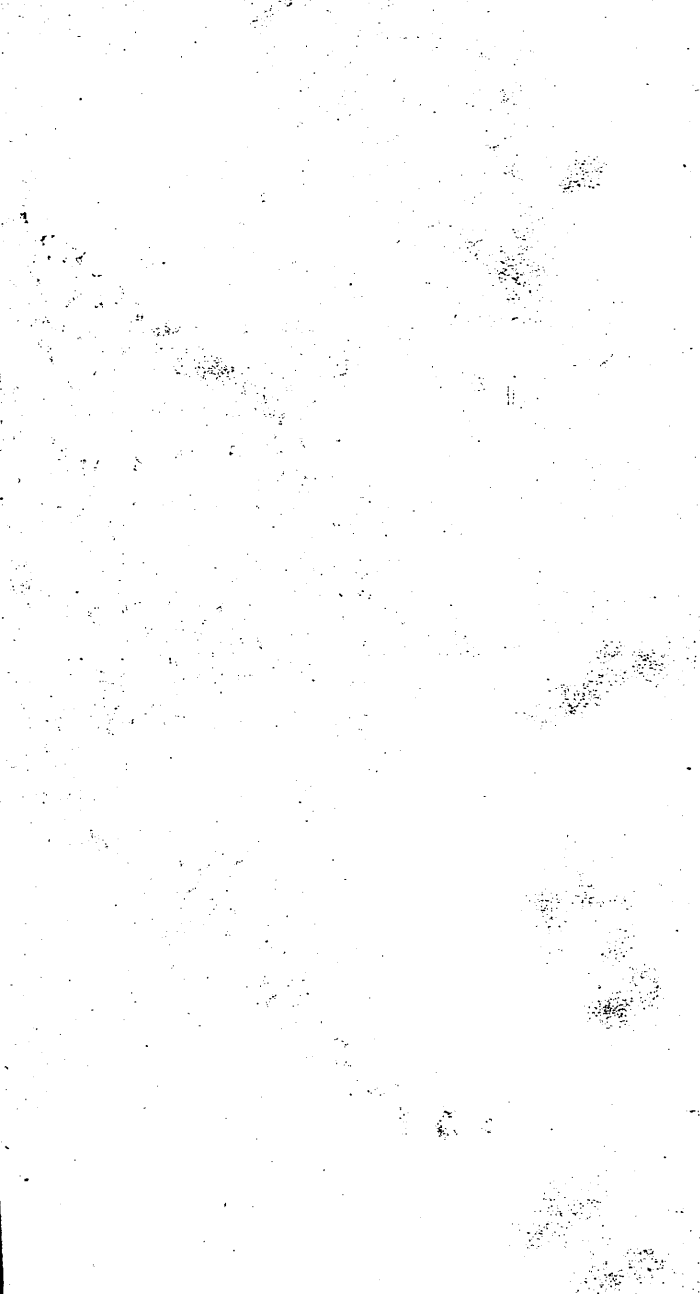
“ Hark, the notes of angels singing,
Glory, glory to the Lamb :
All in Heav’n their tribute bringing,
Raising high the Saviour’s name.

“ Endless life in Him possessing,
Let us join with those above :
Sweet the theme, His great salvation,
Fruit of everlasting love.”

To this ever to be adored Saviour, in union with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory ascribed, now and for evermore.
Amen.

THE END.

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